



“Gottlob stopped short, and, kneeling, he reverently asked the monk to bless him.”—*The Heidenmauer*, page 53.

THE HEIDENMAUER

OR, THE BENEDICTINES

A LEGEND OF THE RHINE

BY

J. FENIMORE COOPER

"From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy,
Have I not seen what human things could do."—BYRON

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OR THE BENEFIT OF THE

A HISTORY OF THE

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INTRODUCTION.

"I shall crave your forbearance a little ; may be, I will call upon you anon, for some advantage to yourself."—*Measure for Measure*.

CONTRARY to a long-established usage, a summer had been passed within the walls of a large town ; but, the moment of liberation arrived, the bird does not quit its cage with greater pleasure than that with which post-horses were commanded. We were four in a light travelling calèche, which strong Norman cattle transported merrily towards their native province. For a time we quitted Paris, the queen of modern cities, with its tumults and its order ; its palaces and its lanes ; its elegance and its filth ; its restless inhabitants and its stationary politicians ; its theories and its practices ; its riches and its poverty ; its gay and its sorrowful ; its rentiers and its patriots ; its young liberals and its old illiberals ; its three estates and its equality ; its delicacy of speech and its strength of conduct ; its government of the people and its people of no government ; its bayonets and its moral force ; its science and its ignorance ; its amusements and its revolutions ; its resistance that goes backward, and its movement that stands still ; its milliners, its philosophers, its opera-dancers, its poets, its fiddlers, its bankers, and its cooks. Although so long enthralled within the barriers, it was not easy to quit Paris entirely without regret—Paris, which every stranger censures, and every stranger seeks ; which moralists abhor and imitate ; which causes the heads of the old to shake, and the hearts of the young to beat ;—Paris, the centre of so much that is excellent, and of so much that cannot be named !

That night we laid our heads on rustic pillows, far from the French capital. The succeeding day we snuffed the air of the sea. Passing through Artois and French Flan-

ders, on the fifth morning we entered the new kingdom of Belgium, by the historical and respectable town of Douaï, and Tournai, and Ath. At every step we met the flag which flutters over the pavilion of the Tuileries, and recognized the confident air and swinging gait of French soldiers. They had just been employed in propping the crumbling throne of the house of Saxe. To us they seemed as much at home as when they lounged on the Quai d'Orsay.

There was still abundant evidence visible at Brussels, of the fierce nature of the struggle that had expelled the Dutch. Forty-six shells were sticking in the side of a single building of no great size, while ninety-three grape-shot were buried in one of its pilasters! In our own rooms, too, there were fearful signs of war. The mirrors were in fragments, the walls broken by langrage, the wood-work of the beds was pierced by shot, and the furniture was marked by rude encounters. The trees of the park were mutilated in a thousand places, and one of the little Cupids, that we had left laughing above the principal gate three years before, was now maimed and melancholy, whilst its companion had altogether taken flight on the wings of a cannon-ball. Though dwelling in the very centre of so many hostile vestiges, we happily escaped the sight of human blood; for we understood from the obliging Swiss who presides over the hotel that his cellars, at all times in repute, were in more than usual request during the siege. From so much proof we were left to infer, that the Belgians had made stout battle for their emancipation, one sign at least that they merited to be free.

Our road lay by Louvain, Thirlemont, Liège, Aix-la-Chapelle, and Juliers, to the Rhine. The former of these towns had been the scene of a contest between the hostile armies, the preceding week. As the Dutch had been accused of unusual excesses in their advance, we looked out for the signs. How many of these marks had been already obliterated, we could not well ascertain; but those which were still visible gave us reason to think that the invaders did not merit all the opprobrium they had received. Each hour, as life advances, am I made to see how capricious and vulgar is the immortality conferred by a newspaper!

It would be injustice to the ancient Bishopric of Liège

to pass its beautiful scenery without a comment. The country possesses nearly every requisite for the milder and more rural sort of landscape ;—isolated and innumerable farm-houses, herds in the fields, living hedges, a waving surface, and a verdure to rival the emerald. By a happy accident, the road runs for miles on an elevated ridge, enabling the traveller to enjoy these beauties at his ease.

At Aix-la-Chapelle we bathed, visited the relics, saw the scene of so many coronations of emperors of more or less renown, sat in the chair of Charlemagne, and went our way.

The Rhine was an old acquaintance. A few years earlier, I had stood upon the sands, at Katwyck, and watched its periodical flow into the North Sea, by means of sluices made in the short reign of the good King Louis, and, the same summer, I had bestrode it, a brawling brook, on the icy side of St. Gothard. We had come now to look at its beauties, in its most beautiful part, and to compare them, so far as native partiality might permit, with the well-established claims of our own Hudson.

Quitting Cologne, its exquisite but incomplete cathedral, with the crane that has been poised on its unfinished towers five hundred years, its recollections of Rubens and his royal patroness, we travelled up the stream so leisurely as to examine all that offered, and yet so fast as to avoid the hazard of satiety. Here we met Prussian soldiers, preparing, by mimic service, for the more serious duties of their calling. Lancers were galloping, in bodies, across the open fields ; videttes were posted, the cocked pistol in hand, at every hay-stack ; while couriers rode, under the spur, from point to point, as if the great strife, which is so menacingly preparing, and which sooner or later must come, had actually commenced. As Europe is now a camp, these hackneyed sights scarce drew a look aside. We were in quest of the interest which nature, in her happier humors, bestows.

There were ruined castles, by scores ; gray fortresses, abbeys, some deserted and others yet tenanted ; villages and towns ; the seven mountains ; cliffs and vineyards. At every step we felt how intimate is the association between the poetry of Nature and that of art ; between the hill-side with its falling turret, and the moral feeling that lends them interest. Here was an island, of no particular excellence, but the walls of a convent of the middle ages crum-

bled on its surface. There was a naked rock, destitute of grandeur, and wanting in those tints which milder climates bestow, but a baronial hold tottered on its apex. Here Cæsar led his legions to the stream, and there Napoleon threw his corps-d'armée on the hostile bank; this monument was to Hoche, and from that terrace the great Adolphus directed his battalions. Time is wanting to mellow the view of our own historical sites; for the sympathy that can be accumulated only by the general consent of mankind has not yet clothed them with the indefinable colors of distance and convention.

In the mood likely to be created by a flood of such recollections, we pursued our way along the southern margin of this great artery of central Europe. We wondered at the vastness of the Rheinfels, admired the rare jewel of the ruined church at Baccarach, and marvelled at the giddy precipice on which a prince of Prussia even now dwells, in the eagle-like grandeur and security of the olden time. On reaching Mayence, the evening of the second day, we deliberately and, as we hoped, impartially compared what had just been seen with that which is so well and so affectionately remembered.

I had been familiar with the Hudson from childhood. The great thoroughfare of all who journey from the interior of the state toward the sea, necessity had early made me acquainted with its windings, its promontories, its islands, its cities, and its villages. Even its hidden channels had been professionally examined, and time was when there did not stand an unknown seat on its banks, or a hamlet that had not been visited. Here then was the force of deep impressions to oppose to the influence of objects still visible.

To me it is quite apparent that the Rhine, while it frequently possesses more of any particular species of scenery, within a given number of miles, than the Hudson, has none of so great excellence. It wants the variety, the noble beauty, and the broad grandeur of the American stream. The latter, within the distance universally admitted to contain the finest parts of the Rhine, is both a large and a small river; it has its bays, its narrow passages among the meadows, its frowning gorges, and its reaches resembling Italian lakes; whereas the most that can be said of its European competitor, is that all these wonderful peculiarities are feebly imitated. Ten degrees of a lower latitude

supply richer tints, brighter transitions of light and shadow, and more glorious changes of the atmosphere, to embellish the beauties of our western clime. In islands, too, the advantage is with the Hudson, for, while those of the Rhine are the most numerous, those of the former stream are bolder, better placed, and, in every natural feature, of more account.

When the comparison between these celebrated rivers is extended to their artificial accessories, the result becomes more doubtful. The buildings of the older towns and villages of Europe seemed grouped especially for effect, as seen in the distant view, though security was in truth the cause, while the spacious, cleanly, and cheerful villages of America must commonly be entered, to be appreciated. In the other hemisphere, the maze of roofs, the church-towers, the irregular faces of wall, and frequently the castle rising to a pinnacle in the rear, give a town the appearance of some vast and antiquated pile devoted to a single object. Perhaps the boroughs of the Rhine have less of this picturesque, or landscape effect, than the villages of France and Italy, for the Germans regard space more than their neighbors, but still are they less commonplace than the smiling and thriving little marts that crowd the borders of the Hudson. To this advantage must be added that which is derived from the countless ruins, and a crowd of recollections. Here, the superiority of the artificial auxiliaries of the Rhine ceases, and those of her rival come into the ascendant. In modern abodes, in villas, and even in seats, those of princes alone excepted, the banks of the Hudson have scarcely an equal in any region. There are finer and nobler edifices on the Brenta, and in other favored spots, certainly, but I know no stream that has so many that please and attract the eye. As applied to moving objects, an important feature in this comparison, the Hudson has perhaps no rival in any river that can pretend to a picturesque character. In numbers, in variety of rig, in beauty of form, in swiftness and dexterity of handling, and in general grace and movement, this extraordinary passage ranks amongst the first of the world. The yards of tall ships swing among the rocks and forests of the highlands, while sloop, schooner, and bright canopied steam-boat, yacht, periagua, and canoe are seen in countless numbers, decking its waters. There is one more eloquent point of difference that should not

be neglected. Drawings and engravings of the Rhine lend their usual advantages, softening and frequently rendering beautiful objects of no striking attractions when seen as they exist ; while every similar attempt to represent the Hudson, at once strikes the eye as unworthy of its original.

Nature is fruitful of fine effects in every region, and it is a mistake not to enjoy her gifts, as we move through life, on account of some fancied superiority in this, or that, quarter of the world. We left the Rhine, therefore, with regret, for, in its way, a lovelier stream can scarce be found.

At Mayence we crossed to the right bank of the river, and passing by the Duchies of Nassau and Darmstadt, entered that of Baden, at Heidelberg. Here we sat upon the Tun, examined the castle, and strolled in the alleys of the remarkable garden. Thence we proceeded to Mannheim, turning our faces, once more, towards the French capital. The illness of one of the party compelled us to remain a few hours in the latter city, which presented little for reflection, unless it were that this, like one or two other towns we had lately seen, served to convince us, that the symmetry and regularity which render large cities magnificent, cause those that are small to appear mean.

It was a bright autumnal day when we returned to the left bank of the Rhine, on the way to Paris. The wishes of the invalid had taken the appearance of strength, and we hoped to penetrate the mountains which bound the Palatinate on its south-western side, and to reach Kaiserslautern, on the great Napoleon road, before the hour of rest. The main object had been accomplished, and as with all who have effected their purpose, the principal desire was to be at home. A few posts convinced us that repose was still necessary to the invalid. This conviction, unhappily as I then believed, came too late, for we had already crossed the plain of the Palatinate, and were drawing near to the chain of mountains just mentioned which are a branch of the Vosges, and are known in the country as the Haart. We had made no calculations for such an event, and former experience had caused us to distrust the inns of this isolated portion of the kingdom of Bavaria. I was just bitterly regretting our precipitation, when the church-tower of Duerckheim peered above the vineyards ; for, on getting nearer to the base of the hills, the land became slightly undulating, and the vine abundant. As we ap-

proached, the village or borough promised little, but we had the word of the postilion that the post-house was an inn fit for a king; and as to the wine, he could give no higher eulogium than a flourish of the whip, an eloquent expression of pleasure for a German of his class. We debated the question of proceeding, or of stopping, in a good deal of doubt, to the moment when the carriage drew up before the sign of the Ox. A substantial looking burgher came forth to receive us. There was the pledge of good cheer in the ample development of his person, which was not badly typified by the sign, and the hale, hearty character of his hospitality removed all suspicion of the hour of reckoning. If he who travels much is a gainer in knowledge of mankind, he is sure to be a loser in the charities that sweeten life. Constant intercourse with men who are in the habit of seeing strange faces, who only dispose of their services to those that are likely never to need them again, and who, of necessity, are removed from most of the responsibilities and affinities of a more permanent intercourse, exhibits the selfishness of our nature in its least attractive form. Policy may suggest a specious blandishment of air, to conceal the ordinary design on the pocket of the stranger; but it is in the nature of things that the design should exist. The passion of gain, like all other passions, increases with indulgence; and thus do we find those who dwell on beaten roads more rapacious than those in whom the desire is latent for want of use.

Our host of Duerckheim offered a pledge, in his honest countenance, independent air, and frank manner, of his also being above the usual mercenary schemes of another portion of the craft, who, dwelling in places of little resort, endeavor to take their revenge of fortune, by showing that they look upon every post-carriage as an especial God-send. He had a garden, too, into which he invited us to enter, while the horses were changing, in a way that showed he was simply desirous of being benevolent, and that he cared little whether we staid an hour or a week. In short, his manner was of an artless, kind, natural, and winning character, that strongly reminded us of home, and which at once established an agreeable confidence that is of an invaluable moral effect. Though too experienced blindly to confide in national characteristics, we liked, too, his appearance of German faith, and more than all were we pleased with the German neatness and comfort, of

which there were abundance, unalloyed by the swaggering pretension that neutralizes the same qualities among people more artificial. The house was not a beer-drinking, smoking caravanserai, like many hotels in that quarter of the world, but it had detached pavilions in the gardens, in which the wearied traveller might, in sooth, take his rest. With such inducements before our eyes, we determined to remain, and we were not long in instructing the honest burgher to that effect. The decision was received with great civility, and, unlike the immortal Falstaff, I began to see the prospects of taking "mine ease in my inn" without having a pocket picked.

The carriage was soon housed, and the baggage in the chambers. Notwithstanding the people of the house spoke confidently, but with sufficient modesty, of the state of the larder, it wanted several hours, agreeably to our habits, to the time of dinner, though we had enjoyed frequent opportunities of remarking that in Germany a meal is never unseasonable. Disregarding hints, which appeared more suggested by humanity than the love of gain, our usual hour for eating was named, and, by way of changing the subject, I asked,—

"Did I not see some ruins, on the adjoining mountain, as we entered the village?"

"We call Duerckheim a city, mein Herr," rejoined our host of the Ox; "though none of the largest, the time has been when it was a capital!"

Here the worthy burgher munched his pipe and chuckled, for he was a man that had heard of such places as London, and Paris, and Pekin, and Naples, and St. Petersburg, or, haply, of the Federal City itself.

"A capital!—it was the abode of one of the smaller princes, suppose; of what family was your sovereign, pray?"

"You are right, mein Herr. Duerckheim, before the French revolution, was a residence (for so the political capitals are called in Germany), and it belonged to the princes of Leiningen, who had a palace on the other side of the city (the place may be about half as large as Hudson, or Schenectady), which was burnt in the war. After the late wars, the sovereign was *médiatisé*, receiving an indemnity in estates on the other side of the Rhine."

As this term of *médiatisé* has no direct synonyme in English, it may be well to explain its signification. Germany.

as well as most of Europe, was formerly divided into a countless number of petty sovereignties, based on the principle of feudal power. As accident, or talent, or alliances, or treachery advanced the interests of the stronger of these princes, their weaker neighbors began to disappear altogether, or to take new and subordinate stations in the social scale. In this manner has France been gradually composed of its original, but comparatively insignificant kingdom, buttressed, as it now is, by Brittany, and Burgundy, and Navarre, and Dauphiny, and Provence, and Normandy, with many other states ; and, in like manner has England been formed of the Heptarchy. The confederative system of Germany has continued more or less of this feudal organization to our own times. The formation of the empires of Austria and Prussia has, however, swallowed up many of these principalities, and the changes produced by the policy of Napoleon gave the death-blow, without distinction, to all in the immediate vicinity of the Rhine. Of the latter number were the Princes of Leiningen, whose possessions were originally included in the French republic, then in the empire, and have since passed under the sway of the King of Bavaria, who, as the legitimate heir of the neighboring Duchy of Deux Ponts, had a nucleus of sufficient magnitude in this portion of Germany to induce the Congress of Vienna to add to his dominions; their object being to erect a barrier against the future aggrandizement of France. As the dispossessed sovereigns are permitted to retain their conventional rank, supplying wives and husbands, at need, to the reigning branches of the different princely families, the term *m. diatise* has been aptly enough applied to their situation.

"The young prince was here, no later than last week," continued our host of the Ox ; "he lodged in that pavilion, where he passed several days. You know that he is a son of the Duchess of Kent, and half-brother to the young princess who is likely, one day, to be queen of England."

"Has he estates here, or is he still, in any way, connected with your government?"

"All they have given him is in money, or on the other side of the Rhine. He went to see the ruins of the old castle ; for he had a natural curiosity to look at a place which his ancestors had built."

"It was the ruins of the castle of Leiningen, then, that I saw on the mountain, as we entered the town?"

"No, mein Herr. You saw the ruins of the Abbey of Limburg; those of Hartenburg, for so the castle was called, lie farther back among the hills."

"What! a ruined abbey, and a ruined castle, too!—Here is sufficient occupation for the rest of the day. An abbey and a castle!"

"And the Heidenmauer, and the Teufelstein."

"How! a Pagan's wall, and a Devil's stone!—You are rich in curiosities!"

The host continued to smoke on philosophically.

"Have you a guide who can take me, by the shortest way, to these places?"

"Any child can do that."

"But one who can speak French is desirable—for my German is far from being classical."

The worthy inn-keeper nodded his head.

"Here is one Christian Kinzel," he rejoined, after a moment of thought, "a tailor who has not much custom, and who has lived a little in France; he may serve your turn."

I suggested that a tailor might find it healthful to stretch his knee-joints.

The host of the Ox was amused with the conceit, and he fairly removed the pipe, in order to laugh at his ease. His mirth was hearty, like that of a man without guile.

The affair was soon arranged. A messenger was sent for Christian Kinzel, and taking my little male travelling companion by the hand, I went leisurely ahead, expecting the appearance of the guide. But, as the reader will have much to do with the place about to be described, it may be desirable that he should possess an accurate knowledge of its locality.

Duerckheim lies in that part of Bavaria which is commonly called the circle of the Rhine. The king, of the country named, may have less than half a million of subjects in this detached part of his territories, which extends in one course from the river to Rhenish Prussia, and in the other from Darmstadt to France. It requires a day of hard posting to traverse this province in any direction, from which it would appear that its surface is about equal to two-thirds of that of Connecticut. A line of mountains, resembling the smaller spurs of the Alleghanies, and which are known by different local names, but which are a branch of the Vosges, passes nearly through the centre of the district, in a north and south course. These mountains cease

abruptly on their eastern side, leaving between them and the river, a vast level surface of that description which is called "flats," or "bottom land," in America. This plain, part of the ancient Palatinate, extends equally on the other side of the Rhine, terminating as abruptly on the eastern as on the western border. In an air line, the distance between Heidelberg and Duerckheim, which lie opposite to each other on the two lateral extremities of the plain, may a little exceed twenty miles, the Rhine running equidistant from both. There is a plausible theory, which says that the plain of the Palatinate was formerly a lake, receiving the waters of the Rhine, and of course discharging them by some inferior outlet, until time, or a convulsion of the earth, broke through the barrier of the mountains at Bingen, draining off the waters, and leaving the fertile bottom described. Irregular sand-hills were visible, as we approached Duerckheim, which may go to confirm this supposition, for the prevalence of northerly winds might easily have cast more of these light particles on the southwestern than on the opposite shore. By adding that the eastern face of the mountains, or that next to the plain, is sufficiently broken and irregular to be beautiful, while it is always distinctly marked and definite, enough has been said to enable us to proceed with intelligence.

It would appear that one of the passes that has communicated, from time immemorial, between the Rhine and the country west of the Vosges, issues on the plain through the gorge near Duerckheim. By following the windings of the valleys, the post-road penetrates, by an easy ascent, to the highest ridge, and following the water-courses that run into the Moselle, descends nearly as gradually into the Duchy of Deux Ponts, on the other side of the chain. The possession of this pass, therefore, in the ages of lawlessness and violence, was, in itself, a title to distinction and power; since all who journeyed by it, lay in person and effects more or less at the mercy of the occupant.

On quitting the town, my little companion and myself immediately entered the gorge. The pass itself was narrow, but a valley soon opened to the width of a mile, out of which issued two or three passages, besides that by which we had entered, though only one of them preserved its character for any distance. The capacity of this valley, or basin, as it must have been when the Palatinate was a lake, is much curtailed by an insulated mountain, whose

base, covering a fourth of the area, stands in its very centre, and which doubtless was an island when the valley was a secluded bay. The summit of this mountain or island-hill is level, of an irregularly oval form, and contains some six or eight acres of land. Here stand the ruins of Limburg, the immediate object of our visit.

The ascent was exceedingly rapid, and of several hundred feet ; reddish free-stone appeared everywhere through the scanty soil, the sun beat powerfully on the rocks ; and I was beginning to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of proceeding, when the tailor approached, with the zeal of new-born courage.

"Voici Christian Kinzel !" exclaimed —, to whom novelty was always an incentive, and who, in his young life, had eagerly mounted Alp and Apennine, Jura and Calabrian hill, tower, monument, and dome, or whatever else served to raise him in the air ; "Allons,—grimpons !"

We scrambled up the hill-side, and, winding among terraces on which the vine and vegetables were growing, soon reached the natural platform. There was a noble view from the summit, but it would be premature to describe it here. The whole surface of the hill furnished evidence of the former extent of the Abbey, a wall having encircled the entire place ; but the principal edifices had been built, and still remained, near the longitudinal centre, on the very margin of the eastern precipice. Enough was standing to prove the ancient magnificence of the structure. Unlike most of the ruins which border the Rhine, the masonry was of a workmanlike kind, the walls being not only massive, but composed of the sand-stone just mentioned neatly hewn, for immense strata of the material exist in all this region. I traced the chapel, still in tolerable preservation, the refectory, that never-failing solacer of monastic seclusion, several edifices apparently appropriated to the dormitories, and some vestiges of the cloisters. There is also a giddy tower, of an ecclesiastical form, that sufficiently serves to give a character to the ruins. It was closed, to prevent idlers from incurring foolish risks by mounting the crazy steps ; but its having formerly been appropriated to the consecrated bells was not at all doubtful. There is also a noble arch near, with several of its disjointed stones menacing the head of him who ventures beneath.

Turning from the ruin, I cast a look at the surrounding

valley. Nothing could have been softer or more lovely than the near view. That sort of necessity, which induces us to cherish any stinted gift, had led the inhabitants to turn every foot of the bottom land to the best account. No Swiss Alp could have been more closely shaved than the meadows at my feet, and a good deal had been made of two or three rivulets that meandered among them. The dam of a rustic mill threw back the water into a miniature lake, and some zealous admirer of Neptune had established a beer-house on its banks, which was dignified with the sign of the "Anchor!" But the principal object in the interior or upland view, was the ruins of a castle, that occupied a natural terrace, or rather the projection of a rock, against the side of one of the nearest mountains. The road passed immediately beneath its walls, a short arrow-flight from the battlements, the position having evidently been chosen as the one best adapted to command the ordinary route of the traveller. I wanted no explanation from the guide to know that this was the castle of Hartenberg. It was still more massive than the remains of the Abbey, built of the same material, and seemingly in different centuries; for while one part was irregular and rude, like most of the structures of the middle ages, there were salient towers filled with embrasures, for the use of artillery. One of their guns, well elevated, might possibly have thrown its shot on the platform of the Abbey-hill, but with little danger even to the ruined walls.

After studying the different objects in this novel and charming scene, for an hour, I demanded of the guide some account of the Pagan's Wall and of the Devil's Stone. Both were on the mountain that lay on the other side of the ambitious little lake, a long musket-shot from the Abbey. It was even possible to see a portion of the former, from our present stand; and the confused account of the tailor only excited a desire to see more. We had not come on this excursion without a fit supply of road-books and maps. One of the former was accidentally in my pocket, though so little had we expected anything extraordinary on this unfrequented road, that as yet it had not been opened. On consulting its pages now, I was agreeably disappointed in finding that Duerckheim and its antiquities had not been thought unworthy of the traveller's especial attention. The Pagan's Wall was there stated to be the spot in which Attila passed the winter before crossing

the Rhine, in his celebrated inroad against the capital of the civilized world, though its origin was referred to his enemies themselves. In short, it was believed to be the remains of a Roman camp, one of those advanced works of the empire, by which the Barbarians were held in check, and of which the Hun had casually and prudently availed himself, in his progress south. The Devil's Stone was described as a natural rock, in the vicinity of the encampment, on which the Pagans had offered sacrifices. Of course the liberated limbs of the guide were put in requisition, to conduct us to a spot that contained curiosities so worthy of even his exertions.

As we descended the mountain of Limburg, Christian Kinzel lighted the way, by relating the opinions of the country concerning the places we had seen and were about to see. It would appear by this legend, that when the pious monks were planning their monastery, a compact was made with the Devil to quarry the stones necessary for so extensive a work, and to transport them up the steep acclivity. The inducement held forth to the evil spirit, for undertaking a work of this nature, was the pretence of erecting a tavern, in which, doubtless, undue quantities of Rhenish wine were to be quaffed, cheating human reason, and leaving the undefended soul more exposed to the usual assaults of temptation. It would seem, by the legends of the Rhine, that the monks often succeeded in outwitting the arch foe in this sort of compact, though perhaps never with more signal success than in the bargain in question. Completely deceived by the artifices of the men of God, the father of sin lent himself to the project with so much zeal, that the Abbey and its appendages were completed in a time incredibly short; a circumstance that his employers took good care to turn to account, after their own fashion, by ascribing it to a miracle of purer emanation. By all accounts the deception was so well managed, that notwithstanding his proverbial cunning, the Devil never knew the true destination of the edifice until the Abbey-bell actually rang for prayers. Then, indeed, his indignation knew no bounds, and he proceeded forthwith to the rock in question, with the fell intent of bringing it into the air above the chapel, and, by its fall, of immolating the monks and their altar together, to his vengeance. But the stone was too firmly rooted to be displaced even by the Devil; and he was finally compelled, by the prayers

of the devotees, who were now, after their own fashion of fighting, fairly in the field, to abandon this portion of the country in shame and disgrace. The curious are shown certain marks on the rock, which go to prove the violent efforts of Satan, on this occasion, and among others the prints of his form, left by seating himself on the stone, fatigued by useless exertions. The more ingenious even trace, in a sort of groove, evidence of the position of his tail, during the time the baffled spirit was chewing the cud of chagrin on his hard stool.

We were at the foot of the second mountain when Christian Kinzel ended this explanation.

"And such is your Duerckheim tradition concerning the Devil's Stone?" I remarked, measuring the ascent with the sight.

"Such is what is said in the country, mein Herr," returned the tailor; "but there are people, hereabouts, who do not believe it."

My little travelling companion laughed, and his eyes danced with expectation.

"Allons, grimpons!" he cried again—"Allons voir ce Teufelstein!"

In a suitable time we were in the camp. It lay on an advanced spur of the mountain, a sort of salient bastion made by nature, and was completely protected on every side, but that at which it was joined to the mass, by declivities so steep as to be even descended with some pain. There was the ruin of a circular wall, half a league in extent, the stones lying in a confused pile around the whole exterior, and many vestiges of foundations and intersecting walls within. The whole area was covered with a young growth of dark and melancholy cedars. On the face exposed to the adjoining mountain, there had evidently been the additional protection of a ditch.

The Teufelstein was a thousand feet from the camp. It is a weather-worn rock, that shows its bare head from a high point in the more advanced ranges of the hills. I took a seat on its most elevated pinnacle, and for a moment the pain of the ascent was forgotten.

The plain of the Palatinate, far as eye could reach, lay in the view. Here and there the Rhine and the Neckar glittered like sheets of silver, among the verdure of the fields, and tower of city and of town, of Mannheim, Spires, and Worms, of nameless villages, and of German resi-

dences, were as plenty in the scene as tombs upon the Appian Way. A dozen gray ruins clung against the sides of the mountains of Baden and Darmstadt, while the castle of Heidelberg was visible, in its romantic glen, sombre, courtly, and magnificent. The landscape was German, and in its artificial parts slightly Gothic; it wanted the warm glow, the capricious outlines, and seductive beauty of Italy, and the grandeur of the Swiss valleys and glaciers; but it was the perfection of fertility and industry embellished by a crowd of useful objects.

It was easy for one thus placed, to fancy himself surrounded by so many eloquent memorials of the progress of civilization, of the infirmities and constitution, of the growth and ambition of the human mind. The rock recalled the age of furious superstition and debased ignorance—the time when the country lay in forest, over which the hunter ranged at will, contending with the beast for the mastery of his savage domain. Still the noble creature bore the image of God, and occasionally some master mind pierced the shades, catching glimpses of that eternal truth which pervades Nature. Then followed the Roman, with his gods of plausible attributes, his ingenious and specious philosophy, his accumulated and borrowed art, his concerted and overwhelming action, his love of magnificence, so grand in its effects, but so sordid and unjust in its means, and last, the most impressive of all, that beacon-like ambition which wrecked his hopes on the sea of its vastness, with the evidence of the falsity of his system as furnished in his fall. The memorial before me showed the means by which he gained and lost his power. The Barbarian had been taught, in the bitter school of experience, to regain his rights, and, in the excitement of the moment, it was not difficult to imagine the Huns pouring into the camp, and calculating their chances of success by the vestiges they found of the ingenuity and resources of their foes.

The confusion of misty images that succeeded was an apt emblem of the next age. Out of this obscurity, after the long and glorious reign of Charlemagne, arose the baronial castle, with feudal violence and its progeny of wrongs. Then came the abbey, an excrescence of that mild and suffering religion, which had appeared on earth, like a ray of the sun, eclipsing the factitious brilliancy of a scene from which natural light had been excluded for a substitute of a meretricious and deceptive quality. Here arose the long

and selfish strife, between antagonist principles, that has not yet ceased. The struggle was between the power of knowledge and that of physical force. The former, neither pure nor perfect, descended to subterfuge and deceit; while the latter vacillated between the dread of unknown causes, and the love of domination. Monk and baron came in collision; this secretly distrusting the faith he professed, and that trembling at the consequences of the blow which his own sword had given; the fruits of too much knowledge in one, and of too little in the other, while both were the prey of those incessant and unwearied enemies of the race, the greedy passions.

A laugh from the child drew my attention to the foot of the rock. He and Christian Kinzel had just settled, to their mutual satisfaction, the precise position that had been occupied by the Devil's tail. A more suitable emblem of his country than that boy, could not have been found on the whole of its wide surface. As secondary to the predominant English or Saxon stock, the blood of France, Sweden, and Holland ran, in nearly equal currents, in his veins. He had not far to seek, to find among his ancestors the peaceful companion of Penn, the Huguenot, the Cavalier, the Presbyterian, the follower of Luther and of Calvin. Chance had even deepened the resemblance; for, a wanderer from infancy, he now blended languages in merry comments on his recent discovery. The train of thought that his appearance suggested was natural. It embraced the long and mysterious concealment of so vast a portion of the earth as America, from the acquaintance of civilized man; its discovery and settlement; the manner in which violence and persecution, civil wars, oppression and injustice, had thrown men of all nations upon its shores; the effects of this collision of customs and opinions, unenthralled by habits and laws of selfish origin; the religious and civil liberty that followed; the novel but irrefutable principle on which its government was based, the silent working of its example, in the two hemispheres, one of which had already imitated the institutions that the other was struggling to approach, and all the immense results that were dependent on this inscrutable and grand movement of Providence. I know not indeed but my thoughts might have approached the sublime, had not Christian Kinzel interrupted them, by pointing out the spot where the Devil had kicked the stone, in his anger.

Descending from the perch, we took the path to Duerckheim. As we came down the mountain, the tailor had many philosophical remarks to make, that were chiefly elicited by the forlorn condition of one who had much toil and little food. In his view of things, labor was too cheap, and wine and potatoes were too dear. To what depth he might have pushed reflections bottomed on principles so natural, it is impossible to say, had not the boy started some doubts concerning the reputed length of the Devil's tail. He had visited the Jardin des Plantes at Paris, seen the kangaroos in the Zoological Garden in London, and was familiar with the inhabitants of a variety of caravans encountered at Rome, Naples, Dresden, and other capitals; with the bears of Berne he had actually been on the familiar terms of a friendly visiting acquaintance. Having also some vague ideas of the analogies of things, he could not recall any beast so amply provided with such an elongation of the dorsal bone as was to be inferred from Christian Kinzel's gutter in the Teufelstein. During the discussion of this knotty point we reached the inn.

The host of the Ox had deceived us in nothing. The viands were excellent, and abundant to prodigality. The bottle of old Duerckheimer might well have passed for Johannisberger, or for that still more delicious liquor, Steinberger, at London or New York; and the simple and sincere civility with which everything was served, gave a zest to all.

It would have been selfish to recruit nature, without thought of the tailor, after so many hours of violent exercise in the keen air of the mountains. He, too, had his cup and his viands, and when both were invigorated by these natural means, we held a conference, to which the worthy post-master was admitted.

The following pages are the offspring of the convocation held in the parlor of the Ox. Should any musty German antiquary discover some immaterial anachronism, a name misplaced in the order of events, or a monk called prematurely from purgatory, he is invited to wreak his just indignation on Christian Kinzel, whose body and soul may St. Benedict of Limburg protect, for evermore, against all critics.

THE HEIDENMAUER;

OR, THE BENEDICTINES.

CHAPTER I.

“Stand you both forth now; stroke your chins, and swear by your beards that I am a knave.”—*As You Like It.*

THE reader must imagine a narrow and secluded valley, for the opening scene of this tale. The time was that in which the day loses its power, casting a light on objects most exposed, that resembles colors seen through glass slightly stained; a peculiarity of the atmosphere, which, though almost of daily occurrence in summer and autumn, is the source of constant enjoyment to the real lover of nature. The hue meant is not a sickly yellow, but rather a soft and melancholy glory, that lends to the hill-side and copse, to tree and tower, to stream and lawn, those tinges of surpassing loveliness that impart to the close of day its proverbial and soothing charm. The setting sun touched with oblique rays a bit of shaven meadow, that lay in a dell so deep as to owe this parting smile of nature to an accidental formation of the neighboring eminences, a distant mountain crest, that a flock had cropped and fertilized, a rippling current that glided in the bottom, a narrow beaten path, more worn by hoof than wheel, and a vast range of forest, that swelled and receded from the view, covering leagues of a hill-chase, that even tradition had never peopled. The spot was seemingly as retired as if it had been chosen in one of our own solitudes of the wilderness, while it was, in fact, near the centre of Europe, and in the sixteenth century. But, notwithstanding the absence of dwellings, and all the other signs of the immediate pres-

ence of man, together with the wooded character of the scene, an American eye would not have been slow to detect its distinguishing features from those which mark the wilds of this country. The trees, though preserved with care, and flourishing, wanted the moss of ages, the high and rocking summit, the variety and natural wildness of the western forest. No mouldering trunk lay where it had fallen, no branch had been twisted by the gale and forgotten, nor did any upturned root betray the indifference of man to the decay of this important part of vegetation. Here and there, a species of broom, such as is seen occasionally on the mast-heads of ships, was erected above some tall member of the woods that stood on an elevated point; land-marks which divided the rights of those who were entitled to cut and clip; the certain evidence that man had long before extended his sway over these sombre hills, and that, retired as they seemed, they were actually subject to all the divisions, and restraints, and vexations, which, in peopled regions, accompany the rights of property.

For an hour preceding the opening of our tale, not a sound of any nature, beyond that of a murmuring brook, had disturbed the quiet of the silent little valley, if a gorge so narrow, and in truth so wild, deserved the name. There was not even a bird fluttering among the trees, nor a hawk soaring above the heights. Once, and for a minute only, did a roebuck venture from its cover, and descend to the rivulet to drink. The animal had not altogether the elastic bound, the timid and irresolute movement, nor the wandering eye of our own deer, but it was clearly an inhabitant of a forest; for while it in some degree confided in the protection, it also distrusted the power of man. No sooner was its thirst assuaged, than, listening with the keenness of an instinct that no circumstances of accidental condition could destroy, it went up the acclivity again, and sought its cover with troubled steps. At the same instant a grayhound leaped from among the trees, on the opposite side of the gorge, into the path, and began bounding back and forth, in the well-known manner of that species of dog, when exercising in restlessness rather than engaged in the hot strife of the chase. A whistle called the hound back from its gambols, and its master entered the path.

A cap of green velvet, bearing a hunting-horn above the shade, a coarse but neat frock of similar color, equally

ornamented with the same badge of office, together with the instrument itself suspended from a shoulder, and the arms usual to one of that class, denoted a forester, or an individual charged with the care of the chase, and otherwise intrusted with a jurisdiction in the forest; functions that would be much degraded by the use of the abused and familiar term of gamekeeper.

The forester was young, active, and, notwithstanding the rudeness of his attire, of a winning exterior. Laying his fusee against the root of a tree, he whistled in the dog, and renewing the call, by means of a shrill instrument that was carried for that purpose, he soon succeeded in bringing its fellow to his side. Coupling the grayhounds in a leash, which he attached to his own person, he threw the horn from its noose, and blew a lively and short strain, that rolled up the valley in mellow and melodious notes. When the instrument was removed from his lips, the youth listened till the last of the distant echoes was done, as if expecting some reply. He was not disappointed. Presently an answering blast came down the gorge, ringing among the woods, and causing the hearts of many of its tenants to beat quick and fearfully. The sounds of the unseen instrument were far more shrill and wild than those of the hunting-horn, while they wanted not for melancholy sweetness. They appeared both familiar and intelligible to the young forester, who no sooner heard them, than he slung the horn in its usual turn of the cord, resumed the fusee, and stood in an attitude of expectation.

It might have been a minute before another youth appeared in the path, higher in the gorge, and advancing slowly towards the forester. His dress was rustic, and altogether that of a peasant, while in his hand he held a long, straight, narrow tube of cherry wood, firmly wrapped with bark, having a mouth-piece and a small bell at the opposite end, resembling those of a trumpet. As he came forward, his face was not without an expression of ill-humor, though it was rather rendered comic than grave, by a large felt hat, the front rim of which fell in an enormous shade above his eyes, rendering the trim cock in the rear, ludicrously pretending. His legs, like those of the forester, were encased in a sort of leathern hose, that left the limbs naked and free below the knee, while the garment above set so loosely and unbuttoned above that important joint, as to offer no restraint to his movements.

"Thou art behind thy time, Gottlob," said the young forester, as the boor approached, "and the good hermit will not give us better welcome for keeping him from prayer. What has become of thy herd?"

"That may the holy man of the Heidenmauer declare, for it is more than I could answer were Lord Emich himself to put the question, and say, in the manner he is wont to use to the Abbot of Limburg—what hath become of thy herd, Gottlob?"

"Nay, this is no trifling matter, if thou hast, in sooth, let the cattle stray! Where hadst thou the beasts last in sight?"

"Here in the forest of Hartenburg, Master Berchthold, on the honor of an humble servitor of the Count."

"Thou wilt yet lose this service, Gottlob, by thy carelessness!"

"It would be a thousand pities were thy words to be true, for in that case Lord Emich would lose the honestest cow-herd in Germany, and it would go near to break my heart were the friars of Limburg to get him! But the beasts cannot be far and I will try the virtue of the horn once more, before I go home to a broken head and a discharge. Dost thou know, Master Berchthold, that the disgrace of which thou speakest never yet befell any of my family, and we have been keepers of cattle longer than the Friedrichs have been electors?"

The forester made an impatient gesture, patted his hounds, and waited for the effects of the new blast, that his companion was by this time preparing to sound. The manner of Gottlob was that of entire confidence in his own knowledge of his calling, for notwithstanding his words, his countenance at no time betrayed uneasiness for the fate of his trust. The valley was soon ringing with the wild and plaintive tones of the cherry-wood horn, the hind taking care to give the strains those intonations, which, by a mute convention, had from time immemorial been understood as the signal for collecting a lost herd. His skill and faith were soon rewarded, for cow after cow came leaping out of the forest, as he blew his air, and ere long the necessary number of animals were in the path, the younger beasts frisking along the way, with elevated tails and awkward bounds, while the more staid contributors of the dairy hurried on, with business-like air but grave steps, as better became their years and their characters in

the hamlet. In a few minutes they were all collected around the person of the keeper, who having counted his charge, shouldered his horn, and disposed himself to proceed towards the lower extremity of the gorge.

"Thou art lucky to have gotten the beasts together, with so little trouble, Gottlob," resumed the forester, as they followed in the train of the herd.

"Say dexterous, Master Berchthold, and do not fear to make me vain-glorious. In the way of understanding my own merits there is little danger of doing me harm. Thou shouldst never discourage modesty, by an over-scrupulous discretion. It would be a village miracle, were a herd so nurtured in the ways of the church to forget its duty!"

The forester laughed, but he looked aside, like one who would not see that to which he wished to be blind.

"At thy old tricks, friend Gottlob! Thou hast let the beasts roam upon the range of the friars!"

"I have paid Peter's pence, been to the chapel of St. Benedict for prayer, confessed to Father Arnolph himself, and all within the month: what more need a man do, to be in favor with the Brothers?"

"I could wish to know if thou ever entertainest Father Arnolph with the history of thy visits to the pastures of the convent, with Lord Emich's herd, honest Gottlob."

"So! Dost thou fancy, Master Berchthold, that, at a moment when there is every necessity to possess a calm and contemplative spirit, I should strive to put the pious monk in a passion, by relating all the antics of some ill-bred cow, or of a heifer, who is as little to be trusted without a keeper, as your jung-frau before she reaches the years of caution is to be trusted at a fair without her mother, or a sharp-sighted old aunt, at the very least!"

"Well, have a care, Gottlob, for Lord Emich, though loving the friars so little, will be apt to order thee into a dungeon, on bread and water for a week, or to make thy back acquainted with the lash, should he come to hear that one of his hinds has taken this liberty with the rights of a neighbor."

"Let Lord Emich then expel the brotherhood from the richest pasturage near the Jaegerthal. Flesh and blood cannot bear to see the beasts of a noble digging into the earth with their teeth, after a few bitter herbs, while the carrion of a convent are rolling the finest and sweetest grasses over their tongues. Look you, Master Berchthold,

these friars of Limburg eat the fattest venison, drink the warmest wine, and say the shortest prayers of any monks in Christendom! Potz-Tausend! There are some who accuse them, too, of shriving the prettiest girls! As for bread and water, and a dungeon, I know from experience that neither of the remedies agrees with a melancholy constitution, and I defy the Emperor, or even the Holy Father himself, to work such a miracle as to make back of mine acquainted with the lash."

"Simply because the introduction hath long since had place."

"That is thy interpretation of the matter, Master Berchthold, and I wish thee joy of a quick wit. But we are getting beyond the limits of the forest, and we will dismiss the question to another conversation. The beasts are full, and will not disappoint the dairy girls, and little matters it whence the nourishment comes—Lord Emich's pastures or a churchly miracle. Thou hast hunted the dogs lightly to-day, Berchthold?"

"I have had them on the mountains for air and movement. They got away on the heels of a roebuck for a short run, but as all the game in this chase belongs to our master, I did not see fit to let them go faster than there was need."

"I rejoice to hear thee say it, for I count upon thy company in climbing the mountain when our work is ended; thy legs will only be the fresher for the toil."

"Thou hast my word, and I will not fail thee; in order that no time be lost, we will part here to meet again in the hamlet."

The forester and the cow-herd made signs of leave-taking, and separated. The former quitted the public road, turning short to the right by a private way, which led him across narrow meadows, and the little river that glided among them, towards the foot of the opposite mountain. Gottlob held on his course to a hamlet that was now visible, and which completely filled a narrow pass in the valley, at a point where the latter made a turn, nearly at a right angle with its general direction.

The path of the former led him to a habitation very different from the rude dwellings towards which the steps of the cow-herd tended. A massive castle occupied a projecting point of the mountain, overhanging the cluster of houses in the gorge, and frowning upon all that attempt-

ed to pass. The structure was a vast but irregular pile. The more modern parts were circular salient towers, that were built upon the uttermost verge of the rock, from whose battlements it would not have been difficult to cast a stone into the road, and which denoted great attention to strength in their masonry, while beauty of form and of workmanship, as they were understood at the period of which we write, were not entirely neglected. These towers, though large, were mere appendages to the main building, which, seen from the position now before the mind of the reader, presented a confused maze of walls, chimneys, and roofs. In some places, the former rose from the greensward which covered the hill-side ; while in others, advantage had been taken of the living rock, which was frequently so blended with the pile it supported, both being of the same reddish free-stone, that it was not easy at the first glance to say, what had been done by nature and what by art.

The path of the forester led from the valley up the mountain, by a gradual and lateral ascent to a huge gate that opened beneath a high arch, communicating with a court within. On this side of the castle there was neither ditch, nor bridge, nor any other of the usual defences, beyond a portcullis, for the position of the hold rendered these precautions in a measure unnecessary. Still great care had been taken to prevent a surprise, and it would have required a sure foot, a steady head, and vigorous limbs, to have effected an entrance into the edifice, by any other passage than its gate.

When Berchthold reached the little terrace that lay before the portal, he loosened his horn, and, standing on the verge of the precipice, blew a hunting strain, apparently in glee. The music echoed among the hills as suited the spot, and more than one crone of the hamlet suspended her toil, in dull admiration, to listen to its wild effect. Replacing the instrument, the youth spoke to his hounds and passed beneath the portcullis, which happened to be raised at the moment.

CHAPTER II.

“What sayest thou to a hare, or the melancholy of moor-ditch?”
—*King Henry IV.*

THE light had nearly disappeared from the gorge, in which the hamlet of Hartenburg lay, when Berchthold descended from the castle, by a path different from that by which he had entered it an hour before, and crossing the rivulet by a bridge of stone, he ascended the opposite bank into the street, or rather the road. The young forester having kennelled the hounds, had laid aside his leash and fusee, but he still kept the horn suspended from his shoulder. At his side, too, he carried a *couteau-de-chasse*, a useful instrument of defence in that age and country, as well as a weapon he was entitled to carry, in virtue of his office under the Count of Leiningen-Hartenburg, the master of the hold he had just quitted, and the feudal lord of most of the adjoining mountains, as well as of sundry villages on the plain of the Palatinate. It would seem that the cow-herd expected his associate, or perhaps we might venture to call him friend, for such in truth did he appear to be, by the easy terms on which they met. Gottlob was in waiting near the cottage of his mother, and when the two joined each other they communicated by a sign, and proceeded with swift steps, leaving the cluster of houses.

Immediately on quitting the hamlet, the valley expanded, and took that character of fertility and cultivation, which has been described to the reader in the Introduction; for all who have perused that opening and necessary preface to our labors, will at once recognize that the two youths introduced to their acquaintance, were now in the mountain basin which contained the Abbey of Limburg. But three centuries, while they have effected little in altering the permanent features of the place, have wrought essential changes in those which were more perishable.

As the young men moved swiftly on, the first rays of the moon touched the tops of the mountains, and ere they had gone a mile, always holding the direction of the pass which communicated with the valley of the Rhine, the towers and roofs of the Abbey itself were illuminated. The

conventual buildings were then perfect, resembling, by their number and confusion, the grouping of some village, while a strong and massive wall encircled the entire brow of the isolated hill. The construction resembled one of those warlike ecclesiastical princes of the middle ages, who wore armor beneath the stole; for while the towers and painted windows, the pious memorials and votive monuments, denoted the objects of the establishment, the defences betrayed that as much dependence was placed on human as on other means, for the protection of those who composed the brotherhood.

"There is a moon for a monk as well as for a cow-herd, it would seem," observed Gottlob, speaking, however, in a voice subdued nearly to a whisper. "There comes the light upon the high tower of the Abbey, and presently it will be glistening on the bald head of every straggler of the convent, who is abroad tasting the last vintage, or otherwise prying into the affairs of some burgher of Duerckheim!"

"Thou hast not much reverence for the pious fathers, honest Gottlob; for it is seldom thou lettest opportunity pass to do them an ill turn, with tongue or hungry beast."

"Look you, Berchthold, we vassals are little more than so much clear water in which our master may see his own countenance, and at need his own humors. Whenever Lord Emich has a sincere hatred for man or horse, dog or cat, town or village, monk or count, I know not why it is so, but I feel my own choler rise, until I am both ready and willing to strike when he striketh, to curse when he curseth, and even to kill when he killeth."

"'Tis a good temper for a servitor, but it is to be hoped, for the sake of Christian credit, that the sympathy does not end here, but that thy affections are as social as thy dislikes."

"More so, as there is faith in man! Count Emich is a huge lover of a venison pasty of a morning, and I feel a yearning for it the day long—Count Emich will despatch you a bottle of Deurckheim in an hour, whereas two would scarce show my zeal for his honor in the same time, and as for other mortifications of this nature, I am not the man to desert my master for want of zeal."

"I believe thee, Gottlob," said Berchthold, laughing, "and even more than thou canst find words to say in thine own favor, on topics like these. But, after all, the Benedictines

are churchmen, and sworn to their faith and duty, as well as any bishop in Germany ; and I do not see the cause of all the dislike of either lord or vassal."

"Ay, thou art in favor with some of the fraternity, and it is rare that the week passes in which thou art not kneeling before some of their altars ; but with me the case is different, for since the penance commanded for that affair of dealing a little freely with one of their herds, I have small digestion for their spiritual food."

"And yet thou hast paid Peter's pence, said thy prayers, and confessed thy sins to Father Arnolph, and all within the month !"

"What wouldst thou have of a sinner ? I gave the money on the promise of having it back with usury ; I prayed on account of an accursed tooth that torments me, at times, in a manner worse than a damned soul is harrowed ; and as to confession, ever since my uncommon candor, concerning the herd, got me into that penance, I confess under favor of a proper discretion. To tell the truth, Master Berchthold, the church is something like a two-year old wife ; pleasant enough when allowed her own way, but a devil of a vixen when folded against her will."

The young forester was thoughtful and silent, and as they were now in the vicinity of the hamlet which belonged to the friars of Limburg, his loquacious and prurient companion saw fit to imitate his reserve, from a motive of prudence. The little artificial lake mentioned in the Introduction was in existence, at the time of our tale ; but the inn, with the ambitious sign of the anchor, is the fruit of far more modern enterprise. When the young men reached a ravine, that opened into the mountain near the present site of this tavern, they turned aside from the high road, first taking care to observe that no curious eye watched their movements.

Here commenced a long and somewhat painful ascent, by means of a rough path, that was only lighted in spots by the rising moon. The vigorous limbs of the forester and the cow-herd, however, soon carried them to the summit of the most advanced spur of the adjoining mountain, where they arrived upon an open heath-like plain. Although the discourse between them had been maintained during the ascent, it was in more subdued tones even than when beneath the walls of Limburg, the spirits of Gottlob appearing to ooze away the higher he mounted.

"This is a dreary and a courage-killing waste, Berchthold," whispered the cow-herd, as his foot touched the level ground; "and it is even more disheartening to enter on it by the aid of the moon, than in the dark. Hast ever been nearer to the Teufelstein, at this hour?"

"I came upon it once at midnight; for it was there I made acquaintance with him that we are now about to visit—Did I never relate the manner of that meeting?"

"What a habit hast thou of taxing a memory! Perhaps if thou wert to repeat it, I might recall the facts by the time thou wert ended; and to speak truth, thy voice is comfortable on this sprite's common."

The young forester smiled, but without derision, for he saw that his companion, spite of his indifference to all grave subjects, was, as is generally the case, the most affected of the two when put to a serious trial, and perhaps he also remembered the difference that education had made in their powers of thinking. That he did not treat the subject as one of light import himself, was also apparent by the regulated and cautious manner in which he delivered the following account.

"I had been on the chases of Lord Emich since the rising of the sun," commenced Berchthold, "for there was need of more than common vigilance to watch the neighboring boors. The search had led me far into the hills, and the night came, not as it is now seen, but so pitchy dark, that, accustomed as I was from childhood to the forest, it was not possible to tell the direction of even a star, much less that of the Castle. For hours I wandered, hoping at each moment to reach the opening of the valley, when I found myself of a sudden in a field that appeared endless and uninhabited."

"Aye—That was this devil's ball-room!—thou meanest untenanted by man."

"Hast thou ever known the helplessness of being lost in the forest, Gottlob?"

"In my own person, never, Master Berchthold; but in that of my herd, it is a misfortune that often befalls me, sinner that I am!"

"I know not that sympathy with thy cows can teach thee the humiliation and depression that come over the mind, when we stand on this goodly earth, cut off from all communication with our fellows, in a desert, though surrounded by living men, deprived of the senses of sight and

hearing for useful ends, and with all the signs of God before the eyes, and yet with none of the common means of enjoying his bounty, from having lost the clew to his intentions."

"Must the teeth, of necessity, be idle, or the throat dry, Master Forester, because the path is hid?"

"At such a moment the appetites are quieted, in the grand desire to return to our usual communication with the earth. It is like being restored to the helplessness of infancy, with all the wants and habits of manhood besetting the character and wishes."

"If thou callest such a thing a restoration, friend Berchtold, I shall make interest with St. Benedict that I may remain deposed to the end of my days."

"I weigh not the meaning of every word I utter, with the recollection of that helpless moment so fresh. But it was when the desolate feeling was strongest, that I roved out of the chase upon this mountain heath; there appeared something before my sight, that seemed a house, and by a bright light that glittered, as I fancied, at a window, I felt again restored to intercourse with my kind."

"Thou usest thy terms with more discretion now," said the cow-herd, fetching a heavy breath, like one who was glad the difficulty had found a termination. "I hope it was the abode of some substantial tenant of Lord Emich, who was not without the means of comforting a soul in distress."

"Gottlob, the dwelling was no other than the Teufelstein, and the light was a twinkling star, that chance had brought in a line with the rock."

"I take it for granted, Master Berchthold, thou didst not knock twice for admission at that door!"

"I am not much governed by the vulgar legends and womanish superstitions of our hills, but——"

"Softly—softly—friend forester; what thou callest by names so irreverent, are the opinions of all who dwell in or about Deurckheim; knight or monk—burgher or count, has equally a respect for our venerable traditions. Tausand Sechs und Zwanziges! what would become of us if we had not a gory tale, or some alarming and reverend spectacle of this sort, to set up against the penances, and prayers, and masses of the Friars of Limburg!—As much wisdom and philosophy as thou wilt, foster-brother of

mine, but leave us our Devil, if it be only to make battle against the Abbot!"

"Notwithstanding thy big words, I well know that none among us has, at heart, a greater dread of this very hill than thyself, Gottlob! I have seen thee sweat cold drops from thy forehead, in crossing the heath after night-fall."

"Art quite sure 'twas not the dew? We have heavy falls of that moisture in these hills, when the earth is parched!"

"Let it then be the dew."

"To oblige thee, Berchthold, I would willingly swear it was a water-spout. But what didst thou make of the rock and the star?"

"I could change the nature of neither. I pretend not to thy indifference to the mysterious power that rules the earth, but thou well knowest that fear never yet kept me from this hill. When a near approach showed me my error, I was about to turn away, not without crossing myself and repeating an Ave, as I am ready to acknowledge; but a glance upward convinced me that the stone was occupied——"

"Occupied?—I have always known that it was possessed, but never before did I think it was occupied!"

"There was one seated on its uppermost projection, as plainly to be seen as the rock itself."

"Whereupon thou madest manifest that good speed which had gained thee the favor of the Count, and thy post of forester."

"I hope the nerve to put the duties of my office in practice, had their weight with Lord Emich," rejoined Berchthold, a little quickly. "I did not run, Gottlob, but I spoke to the being who had chosen a seat so remarkable, and at that late hour."

Spite of his spirit and affected humor, the cow-herd unconsciously drew nearer to his companion, casting at the same time an oblique glance in the direction of the suspected rock.

"Thou seemest troubled, Gottlob."

"Dost thou think I am without bowels? What, shall a friend of mine be in this strait, and I not troubled! Heaven save thee, Berchthold, were the best cow in my herd off her stomach, I could not be in greater concern. Hadst any answer?"

"I had—and the result has gone to show me," returned

the forester, musing as he spoke, like one who was obtaining glimpses of long-concealed truth, "that our fears oftentimes prevent us from seeing things as they are, and are the means of nourishing our mistakes. I got an answer, and certainly, contrary to what most in Duerckheim would have believed, it was given in a human voice."

"That was encouraging, though it were hoarser than the roaring of a bull!"

"It spoke mildly and in reason, Gottlob, as thou wilt readily believe, when I tell thee it was no other than the voice of the Anchorite of the Cedars. Our acquaintance then and there commenced, since which time, as thou knowest well, it hath not flagged for want of frequent visits to his abode, on my part."

The cow-herd walked on in silence, for more than a minute, and then stopping short, he abruptly addressed his companion:—

"And this then hath been thy secret, Berchthold, concerning the manner of commencing on thy new friendship."

"There is no other. I well knew how much thou wert fettered by the opinions of the country, and was afraid of losing thy company in these visits, were I, without caution, to tell all the circumstances of our interview. But now thou hast become known to the anchorite, I do not fear thy desertion."

"Never count upon too many sacrifices from thy friends, Master Berchthold! The mind of man is borne upon by so many fancies, is ruled by so many vagaries, and tormented by so many doubts, when there is question concerning the safety of the body, to say nothing of the soul, that I know no more rash confidence, than to count too securely on the sacrifices of a friend."

"Thou knowest the path, and can return by thyself, to the hamlet, if thou wilt," said the forester peevishly, and not without severity.

"There are situations in which it is as difficult to go back as to go forward," observed Gottlob; "else, Berchthold, I might take thee at thy word, and go back to my careful mother, a good supper, and a bed that stands between a picture of the Virgin, one of St. Benedict, and one of my Lord the Count. But for my concern for thee, I would not go another foot toward the camp."

"Do as thou wilt," said the forester, who appeared, how-

ever, to know the apprehension his companion felt of being left alone in that solitary and suspected spot, and who turned his advantage to good account by quickening his pace in such a manner as would soon have left Gottlob to his own thick-coming fancies, had he not diligently imitated his gait. "Thou canst tell the people of Lord Emich, that thou abandoned me on this hill."

"Nay," returned Gottlob, making a merit of necessity, "if I do that, or say that, may they make a Benedictine of me, and the Abbot of Limburg to boot!"

As the cow-herd, who felt all his master's antipathies against their religious neighbors, expressed this determination in a voice strong as his resolution, confidence was restored between the friends, who continued their progress with swift paces. The place was, sooth to say, one every way likely to quicken any dormant seeds of superstition that education, or tradition, or local opinions had implanted in the human breast.

By this time our adventurers had approached a wood of low cedars, which, apparently encircled in a round wall that was composed of a confused but vast pile of fallen stones, grew upon the advanced spur of the hills. Behind them lay the heath-like plain, while the bald rock which the moon-beams had just lighted, raising its head from out of the earth, resembled some gloomy monument placed in the centre of the waste, to mark and to render obvious, by comparison, the dreary solitude of the naked fields. The back-ground was the dark slopes and ridges of the forest of the Haart mountains. On their right was the glen, or valley, from which they had just ascended; and on their front, looking a little obliquely from the grove, the plain of the Palatinate, which lay in misty obscurity, like a dim sea of cultivation, hundreds of feet beneath their elevated stand.

It was rare, indeed, that any immediate dependant of the Count Emich, and more especially any of those who dwelt in or about his castle, and who were likely to be called into his service at an unexpected moment, ventured so far from the fortress, and in the direction of the hostile Abbey, without providing himself with the means of offence and defence. Berchthold wore, as wont, his hunting-knife, or the short straight sword, which to this day is carried by that description of European dependant called a *chasseur*, and who is seen, degraded to the menial offices of a footman, standing

behind the carriages of ambassadors and princes, reminding the observant spectator of the regular and certain decadency of the usages of feudal times. Neither had Gottlob been neglectful of his personal security, as respects human foes ; for on the subject of resisting all such attacks, his manhood was above reproach, as had been proved in more than one of those bloody frays, which in that age were of frequent occurrence between the vassals of the minor German princes. The cow-herd had provided himself with a heavy weapon that his father had often wielded in battle, and which needed all the vigor of the muscular arm of the son, to flourish with a due observance of the required positions and attitudes. Fire-arms were of too much value and of too imperfect use to be resorted to on every light occasion, like that which had now drawn the foster-brothers, for such supported by long habit was the secret of the intimacy between the forester and the cow-herd, from their hamlet to the hill of Duerckheim.

Berchthold loosened his *couteau-de-chasse*, as he turned by an ancient gate-way, whose position was known merely by an interruption of the ditch that had protected this face of the wall, and an opening in the wall itself, to enter the inclosure, which the reader will at once recognize as the Pagan's Camp of the Introduction. At the same moment Gottlob cast his heavy weapon from his shoulder, and grasped its handle in a more scientific manner. There was certainly no enemy visible to justify these movements, but the increasing solitude of the place, and that impression of danger which besets the faculties, when we find ourselves in situations favorable to deeds of violence, probably induced the double and common caution. The light of the moon, which was not yet full, had not sufficient power to penetrate the thick branches of the cedars ; and when the youths were fairly beneath the gloomy foliage, although not left in the ordinary darkness of a clouded night, they were perhaps in that very species of dull and misty illumination, which, by leaving objects uncertain while visible, is the best adapted to undermine the confidence of a distrustful spirit. There was little wind, but the sighs of the night air were plaintively audible, while the adventurers picked their way among the fragments of the place.

It has been elsewhere said, that the Heidenmauer was originally a Roman camp. The warlike and extraordinary

people who had erected these advanced works on the remotest frontier of their wide empire, had, of course, neglected none of the means that were necessary, under the circumstances, either for their security or for their comfort. The first had been sufficiently obtained by the nearly isolated position of the hill, protected, as it was, by walls so massive and so high as those must have been, which had consumed the quantity of materials still visible in the large circuit that remained ; while the interior furnished abundant proofs that the latter had not been neglected, in its intersecting remains, over which Gottlob more than once stumbled, as he advanced into the shadows of the place. Here and there, a ruined habitation, more or less dilapidated, was still standing, furnishing, like the memorable remains of Pompeii and Herculaneum, interesting and infallible evidence of the usages of those who have so long since departed to their eternal rest. It would seem, by the rude repairs which rather injured than embellished these touching, though simple monuments of what the interior of the camp had been in its day of power and pride, that modern adventurers had endeavored to turn them to account, by converting the falling huts into habitations appropriated to their own temporary uses. All, however, appeared to have been long before finally abandoned ; for as Berchthold and his companion stole cautiously among the crumbling stones, the gaping rents and roofless walls denoted hopeless decay. At length the youths paused, and fastened their looks in a common direction, as if apprized that they were near the goal of their expedition.

In a part of the grove, where the cedars grew more dense and luxuriant than on most of that stony and broken soil, stood a single low building, which, of all there, had the air of being still habitable. Like the others, it either had been originally constructed by the masters of the world, or restored on the foundations of some Roman construction by the followers of Attila, who, it will be remembered, had passed a winter in this camp ; and it was now rendered weather-proof by the usual devices of the poor and laborious. There was a single window, a door, and a rude chimney, which the climate and the elevated situation of the place rendered nearly indispensable. The light of a dim torch shone through the former, the only sign that the hut was tenanted ; for on the exterior, with the exception of the rough repairs just mentioned, all around it lay

in the neglected and eloquent stillness of ruin. The reader will not imagine, in this description, any of that massive grandeur which so insensibly attaches itself to most that is connected with the Roman name ; for while, in the nature of things, the most ponderous and the most imposing of the public works of that people are precisely those which are the most likely to have descended to our own times, the traveller often meets with memorials of their power, that are so frail and perishable in their construction, as to owe their preservation, in a great measure, to an accidental combination of circumstances favorable to such a result. Still, the Roman was ordinarily as much greater in little things, if connected with a public object, as he excelled all who have succeeded him, in those which were of more importance. The Ringmauer, or Heidenmauer, is a strong proof of what we say. There is not an arch, nor a tomb, nor a gate, nor a paved road of any description in the vicinity of Duerckheim, to show that the post was more than a temporary military position ; and yet the presence of its former occupants is established by more evidence than would probably be found, a century hence, were half of the present cities of Christendom to be suddenly abandoned. But these evidences are rude and suited to the objects which had brought them into existence.

The forester and the cow-herd stood long regarding the solitary hut, which had arrested their looks like men hesitating to proceed.

"I had more humor for the company of the honest anchorite, Master Berchthold," said the latter "before thou madest me acquainted with his fondness for taking the night air on the Teufelstein."

"Thou hast not fear, Gottlob ? Thou, who bearest so good a name for courage among our youths !"

"I shall be the last to accuse myself of cowardice or of any other discreditable quality, friend forester, but prudence is a virtue in a youth, as the Abbot of Limburg himself would swear, were he here——"

"He is not present in his own reverend and respected person," said a voice so nigh the ear of Gottlob, as to cause him to jump nimbly aside ; "but one who may humbly represent some portion of his sanctity, is not wanting to affirm the truth of what thou sayest, son."

The startled young men saw that a monk of the opposite

mountain had unexpectedly appeared between them. They were on the lands of the Abbey, or rather on ground in dispute between the burghers of Duerckheim and the convent, but actually in possession of the latter ; and they felt the insecurity of their situation as the dependants of the count of Hartenburg. Neither spoke, therefore, for each was striving to invent some plausible pretext for his appearance in a place so unfrequented, and which, in general, was held in so little favor by the neighboring peasantry.

"You are youths of Duerckheim?" asked the monk, endeavoring to observe their features by the imperfect light that penetrated the foliage of the dark cedars. Gottlob, whose besetting infirmity was a too exuberant fluency of tongue, took on himself the task of answering.

"We are youths, reverend father," he said, "as thy quick and sagacious sight hath so well seen. I will not deny my years, and if I would, the devil, who besets all between fifteen and five-and-twenty in the shape of some giddy infirmity, would soon betray the imposture."

"Of Duerckheim, son?"

"As there is question between the Abbey and the town concerning these hills, we might not stand any better in thy favor, holy Benedictine, were we to say yes."

"In that suspicion thou dost little justice to the Abbey, son ; we may defend the rights of the Church, confided in their temporalities as they are to an unworthy and sinful brotherhood, without feeling any uncharitableness against those who believe they have claims better than our own. The love of mammon is feeble in bosoms that are devoted to self-denying and repentant lives. Say then boldly that that you are a Duerckheim, and dread not my displeasure."

"Since it is thy good pleasure, benevolent monk, I will say boldly that we are of Duerckheim."

"And you come to consult the holy Anchorite of the Cedars?"

"It is not necessary that I should tell one of thy knowledge of human nature, reverend Benedictine, that the failing of all dwellers in small towns, is an itching to look into the affairs of their neighbors. Himmel ! If our worthy burgomasters would spare a little time from the affairs of other people to look into their own, we should all be greatly gainers ; they in their property, and we in our comfort !"

The Benedictine laughed, and he motioned for the youths to follow, advancing himself towards the hut.

"Since you have given yourself this trouble, no doubt with a praiseworthy and pious intention, my sons," he said, "let not respect for my presence change your purpose. We will go into the cell of the holy hermit, in company ; and if there should be advantage from his blessing, or discourse, believe me I will not be so unjust as to envy either of you a share."

"The manner in which the friars of Limburg deny themselves advantages, in order to do profit to their fellow-Christians, is in the mouths of all, far and near ; and this generosity of thine, reverend monk, is quite of a piece with the well-earned reputation of the whole brotherhood."

As Gottlob spoke gravely, and bowed with sufficient reverence, the Benedictine was in a slight degree his dupe ; though, as he passed beneath the low portal of the hut, he could not prevent a lurking suspicion of the truth.

CHAPTER III.

"He comes at last in sullen loneliness,
And whence they know not, why they need not guess."—*Lara*.

In those ages in which mortal wrongs were chiefly repaired by superstition, and the slaves of the grosser passions believed they were only to be rebuked by signal acts of physical self-denial, the world often witnessed examples of men retiring from its allurements, to caves and huts, for the ostensible purposes of penitence and prayer. That this extraordinary pretension to godliness was frequently the cloak of ambition and deceit is certain, but it would be uncharitable to believe that, in common, it did not proceed from an honest, though it might be an ill-directed, zeal. Hermitages are still far from infrequent in the more southern parts of Europe, though they are of rare occurrence in Germany ; but previously to the change of religion which occurred in the sixteenth century, and consequently near the period of this tale, they were perhaps more often met with among the descendants of the northern race, than among the more fervid fancies of the southern stock of that

quarter of the world. It is a law of nature that the substances which most easily receive impressions, are the least likely to retain them ; and possibly there may be requisite a constancy and severity of character to endure the never-ending and mortifying exactions of the anchorite, that were not so easily found among the volatile and happy children of the sun, as among the sterner offspring of the regions of cold and tempests.

Whatever may be said of the principles of him who thus abandoned worldly ease for the love of God, it is quite sure, that in practice, there were present and soothing rewards in this manner of life, that were not without strong attractions to morbid minds ; especially to those in which the seeds of ambition were dormant rather than extinct. It was rare, indeed, that a recluse established himself in the vicinity of a simple and religious neighborhood, and few were they who sought absolute solitude, without reaping a rich harvest of veneration and moral dependence among the untrained minds of his admirers. In this treacherous manner does vanity beset us in our strong-holds of mental security, and he who has abandoned the world, in the hope of leaving behind him those impulses which endangered his hopes, finds the enemy in a new shape, intrenched in the very citadel of his defences. There is little merit, and commonly as little safety, in turning the back on any danger, and he has far less claims to the honors of a hero who outlives the contest in consequence of means so questionable, than he who survives because he has given a mortal blow to his antagonist. The task assigned to man is to move among his fellows doing good, filling his part in the scale of creation, and escaping from none of the high duties which God has allotted to his being ; and greatly should he be grateful, that, while his service is arduous, he is not left without the powerful aid of that intelligence which controls the harmony of the universe.

The Anchorite of the Cedars, as the recluse now visited by the monk and his accidental companions was usually termed by the peasants, and by the burghers of Duerckheim, had made his appearance about six months before the opening of our story, in the Ringmauer. Whence he had come, how long he intended to remain, and what had been his previous career, were facts equally unknown to those among whom he so suddenly took up his abode. None had seen him arrive, nor could any say from what

sources he drew the few articles of household furniture which were placed in his hut. They who left the camp untenanted one week, or returning the next, had found it occupied by a man, who had arranged one of the deserted buildings in a manner to shelter him from the storms, and who, by erecting a crucifix at his door, had sufficiently announced the motive of his retirement. It was usual to hail the establishment of a hermit in any particular district, as a propitious event ; and many were the hopes excited, and plans of effecting temporal objects concocted, by the intervention of the prayers of the stranger, before his presence had been known a fortnight. All within the influence of the name of the hermit, except Emich of Leiningen-Hartenburg, the burgomasters of Duerckheim, and the monks of Limburg, heard of his arrival with satisfaction. The haughty and warlike baron had imbibed a standing prejudice against all devotees, from an inherited enmity to the adjoining convent, which had contested the sovereignty of the valley with his family for ages ; while the magistrates had a latent jealousy of every influence which custom and the laws had not rendered familiar. As to the monks, the secret of their distrust was to be found in that principle of human nature, which causes us to dislike being outdone in any merit of which we make an especial profession, even though superior godliness be its object. Until now the Abbot of Limburg was held to be the judge, in the last resort, of all intercessions between earth and heaven ; and as his supremacy had the support of time, he had long enjoyed it in that careless security which lures so many of the prosperous to their downfall.

These antipathies on the part of the honored and powerful might, to say the least, have rendered the life of the anchorite very uncomfortable, if not positively insecure, were it not for the neutralizing effect of the antagonistic forces which were set in motion. Opinion, deepened by superstition, held its shield over the humble hut, and month after month glided away, after the arrival of the stranger, during which he received no other testimonials of the feelings excited by his presence, than those connected with the reverence of the bulk of the population. An accidental communication with Berchthold was ripening into intimacy, and, as will be seen in the course of the narrative, there were others to whom his counsel, or his motives, or his prayers, were not indifferent.

The latter fact was made sufficiently apparent to those who on account of their mutual distrust, now presented themselves with less ceremony than usual, at the threshold of the hut. The light within came from a fagot which was burning on the rude hearth, but it was quite strong enough to show the monk and his companions that the anchorite was not alone. Their footsteps had evidently been heard, and a female had time to arise from her knees, and to arrange her mantle in such a manner as effectually to conceal her countenance. The hurried action was scarcely completed, when the Benedictine darkened the door with his gloomy robes, while Berchthold and his friend stood gazing over his shoulders, with lively curiosity mingled with surprise.

The form and countenance of the anchorite were those of middle age. His eye had lost nothing of its quickness or intelligence, though his movements had the deliberation and care that long experience insensibly interweaves in the habits of those who have not lived in vain. He expressed neither concern nor wonder at the unexpected visits, but regarding his guests earnestly, like one who assured himself of their identity, he mildly motioned for all to enter. There was jealous suspicion in the glance of the Benedictine, as he complied: for until now, he had no reason to believe that the recluse was usurping so intimate and so extensive an influence over the minds of the young, as the presence of the unknown female would give reason to believe.

"I knew that thou wert of holy life and constant prayer, venerable hermit," he said, in a tone that questioned in more than one meaning of the term, "but until this moment, I had not thought thee vested with the Church's power to hearken to the transgressions of the faithful and to forgive sins!"

"The latter is an office, brother, that of right belongs only to God. The head of the Church himself is but an humble instrument of faith, in discharging this solemn trust."

The countenance of the monk did not become more amicable at this reply, nor did he fail to cast a scrutinizing glance at the muffled form of the stranger, in a fruitless endeavor to recognize her person.

"Thou hast not even the tonsure," he continued, while his uneasy eye rolled from that of the recluse to the form

of the stranger, who had shrunk, as far as the narrow place would permit, from observation.

"Thou seest, father, I have all the hair that time and infirmities have left me. But is it thought, in thy benefited and warlike abbey, that the advice of one who has lived long enough to know and to lament his own errors, can injure the less experienced? If unhappily I may have deceived myself, thou art timely present, reverend monk, to repair the wrong."

"Let the maiden come to the confessional of the Abbey Church, if distrust or apprehension weigh upon her mind; doubt it not, she will find great comfort in the experiment."

"As I will testify, from many trials—" abruptly interposed the cow-herd, who advanced intrusively between the two devotees, in a manner to occupy all their attention. "'Go upon the hill, and ease thy soul, Gottlob,' is my good and venerable mother in the practice of saying, whenever my opinion of myself is getting to be too humble, 'and discourse with some of the godly fathers of the Abbey, whose wisdom and unction will not fail to lighten thy heart of even a heavier load. There is Father Ulrich, he is a paragon of virtue and self-denial; and Father Cuno is even more edifying and salutary than he; while Father Siegfried is more balmy to a soul, than the most reverend Abbot, the virtuous and pious Father Bonifacius himself! Whatever thou doest, child, go upon the hill, and enter boldly into the church, like a loaded and oppressed sinner as thou art, and especially seek counsel and prayer from the excellent and beloved father Siegfried.'"

"And thou—who art thou?" demanded the half-doubting monk, "that thus speakest of me, in terms that I so little merit, to my face?"

"I would I were Lord Emich of Hartenburg, or for that matter, the Elector Palatine himself, in order to do justice to those I honor; in which case certain Fathers of Limburg should have especial favor, and that quickly too, after my own flesh and blood! Who am I, father? I wonder that a face so often seen at the confessional should be forgotten. What there is of me to boast of, Father Siegfried, is of thine own forming—but it is no cause of surprise that thou dost not recall me to mind, since the meek and lowly of spirit are sure to forget their own good works!"

"Thou callest thyself Gottlob—but the name belongs to many Christians."

"More bear it, reverend monk, than know how to do it honor. There is Gottlob Frincke, as arrant a knave as any in Duerckheim ; and Gottlob Popp might have more respect for his baptismal vow ; and as to Lord Gottlob of Manheim——"

"We will overlook the transgressions of the remainder of thy namesakes, for the good that thou thyself hast done," interrupted the Benedictine, who, having insensibly yielded to the unction of flattery in the commencement of the interview, began now to be ashamed of the weakness, as the fluent cow-herd poured forth his words in a manner to excite some suspicion of the quality of praise that came from such a source. "Come to me when thou wilt, son, and such counsel as a weak head, but a sincere heart, can render, shall not be withheld."

"How this would lighten the heart of my old mother to hear ! 'Gottlob,' would she say——"

"What has become of thy companion, and of the maiden?" hastily demanded the Benedictine.

As the part of the cow-herd was successfully performed, he stood aside, with an air of well-acted simplicity and amazement, leaving the discourse to be pursued between the recluse and the monk.

"Thy guests have suddenly left us," continued the latter, after satisfying himself, by actual observation, that no one remained in the hut but himself, its regular occupant, and the honey-tongued Gottlob ; "and, as it would seem, in company !"

"They are gone as they came, voluntarily and without question."

"Thou knowest them, by frequent visits, holy hermit ?"

"Father, I question none : were the Elector Friedrich to come into my abode, he would be welcome, and this cow-herd is not less so. To both, at parting, I merely say, 'God speed ye !'"

"Thou keepest the cattle of the burghers, Gottlob ?"

"I keep a herd, reverend priest, such as my masters please to trust to my care."

"We have grave cause of complaint against one of thy fellows who serves the Count of Hartenburg, and who is in the daily habit of trespassing on the pastures of the church. Dost know the hind ?"

“Potz Tausend ! If all the knaves who do these wrongs, when out of sight of their masters, were set in a row before the eyes of the most reverend Abbot of Limburg, he would scarce know whether to begin with prayers or stripes, and they say he is a potent priest at need, with both ! I sometimes tremble for my own conduct, though no one can have a better opinion of himself than I, poor and lowly as I stand in your reverend presence ; for a hard fortune, and some oversight in the management of my father's affairs, have brought me to the need of living among such associates. Were I not of approved honesty, there might be more beasts on the Abbey lands ; and they who now pass their time in fasting in sheer humility, might come to the practice of sheer necessity.”

The Benedictine examined the meek countenance of Gottlob with a keen distrustful eye ; he next invited the hermit to bestow his blessing, and then motioning for the hind to retire, he entered on the real object of his visit to the hermitage.

We shall merely say, at this point of the narrative, that the moment was extremely critical to all who dwelt in the Palatinate of the Rhine. The Elector had, perhaps imprudently for a prince of his limited resources, taken an active part in the vindictive warfare then raging, and serious reverses threatened to endanger not only his tranquillity but his throne. It was a consequence of the feudal system, which then so generally prevailed in Europe, that internal disorders succeeded any manifest, though it might be only a temporary derangement of the power of the potentate that held the right of sovereignty over the infinite number of petty rulers who, at that period, weighed particularly heavy on Germany. To them he was the law, for they were not apt to acknowledge any supremacy that did not come supported by the strong hand. The ascending scale of rulers, including baron, count, landgrave, margrave, duke, elector, and king, up to the nominal head of the state, the emperor himself, with the complicated and varied interests, embracing allegiance within allegiance, and duty upon duty, was likely in itself to lead to dissension, had the Imperial Crown been one of far more defined and positive influence than it was. But, uncertain and indirect in the application of its means, it was rare that any very serious obstacle to tranquillity was removed without the employment of positive force. No sooner was the Emperor

involved in a serious struggle, than the great princes endeavored to recover that balance which had been lost by the long ascendancy of a particular family, while the minor princes seldom saw themselves surrounded with external embarrassment, that internal discord did not come to increase the evil. As a vassal was commonly but a rude reflection of his lord's enmities and prejudices, the reader will have inferred from the language of the cow-herd, that affairs were not on the most amicable footing between those near neighbors, the Abbot of Limburg and the Count of Hartenburg. The circumstance of their existing so near each other was, of itself, almost a certain cause of rivalry; to which natural motive of contention may be added the unremitted strife between the influence of superstition and the dread of the sword.

The visit of the monk had reference to certain interests connected with the actual state of things, as they existed between the Abbey and the Castle. As it would be premature, however, to expose his object, we shall be content with saying, that the conference between the priest and the hermit lasted for half an hour, when the former took his leave, craving a blessing from one of a life so pure and self-denying as his host.

At the door of the hut the monk found Gottlob, who had early been gotten rid of, it will be remembered, but who, for reasons of his own, had seen fit to await the termination of the conference.

"Thou here, son!" exclaimed the Benedictine. "I had thought thee at peace in thy bed, favored with the benediction of a hermit so holy!"

"Good fortune is sure to drive sleep from my eyes, father," returned Gottlob, dropping in by the side of the monk, who was walking through the cedars towards the ancient gateway of the camp. "I am not of your animal kind, that is no sooner filled with a good thing than it lies down to rest; but the happier I become, the more I desire to be up to enjoy it."

"Thy wish is natural, and, although many natural desires are to be resisted, I do not see the danger of our knowing our own happiness."

"Of the danger I will say nothing, father, but of the comfort, there is not a youth in Duerckheim, who can speak with greater certainty than myself."

"Gottlob," said the Benedictine, insensibly edging near-

er his companion, like one willing to communicate confidentially, "since thou namest Duerckheim, canst say aught of the humor of its people, in this matter of contention between our holy Abbot and Lord Emich of Hartenburg?"

"Were I to tell thy reverence the truth that lies deepest in my mind, it would be to say, that the burghers wish to see the affair brought to an end, in such a way as to leave no doubt, hereafter, to which party they most owe obedience and love, since they find it a little hard upon their zeal, to have so large demands of these services made by both parties."

"Thou canst not serve God and Mammon, son, so sayeth one who could not deceive."

"And so sayeth reason, too, worshipful monk, but to give thee at once my inmost soul, I believe there is not a man in our Duerckheim, who believes himself strong enough in learning to say, in this strife of duties, which is God and which is Mammon!"

"How! do they call in question our sacred mission—our divine embassy—in short, our being what we are?"

"No man is so bold as to say that the monks of Limburg are what they are; that might be irreverent to the Church, and indecent to Father Siegfried; and the most we dare to say is, that they seem to be what they are; and that is no small matter, considering the way things go in this world. 'Seem to be, Gottlob,' said my poor father, 'and thou wilt escape envy and enemies; for in this seemliness there is nothing so alarming to others; it is only when one is really the thing itself, that men begin to find fault. If thou wishest to live peaceably with thy neighbors, push nothing beyond seeming to be, for that much all will bear, since all can seem; whereas being oftentimes sets a whole village in an uproar. It is wonderful the virtue there is in seeming, and the heart-burnings and scandal, ay, and the downright quarrels there are in being just what one seems.' No, the most we say, in Duerckheim, is that the monks of Limburg seem to be men of God."

"And Lord Emich?"

"As to Count Emich, father, we hold it wise to remember he is a great noble. The Elector has not a bolder knight, nor the Emperor a truer vassal; we say, therefore, that he seems to be brave and loyal."

"Thou makest great account, son, of these apparent qualities."

"Knowing the frailty of man, father, and the great likelihood of error, when we wish to judge of acts and reasons, that lie deeper than our knowledge, we hold it to be the most prudent. No, let us of Duerckheim alone, as men of caution!"

"For a cow-herd, thou wantest not wit—Canst read?"

"By God's favor, Providence put that little accident in my way when a child, reverend monk, and I picked it up, as I might swallow a sweet morsel."

"'Tis a gift more likely to injure than to serve one of thy calling. The art can do little benefit to thy herd!"

"I will not take upon myself to say, that any of the cattle are much the better for it; though, to deal fairly by thee, reverend Benedictine, there are animals among them that seem to be."

"How! wilt thou attempt to show a fact not only improbable but impossible? Go to, thou hast fallen upon some silly work of a jester. There have been numberless of these commissions of the devil poured forth, since the discovery of that imprudent brother of Mainz. I would gladly hear in what manner a beast can profit by the art of printing!"

"Thy patience, Father Siegfried, and thou shalt know. Now here is a hind that can read, and there is one that cannot. We will suppose them both the servants of Emich of Hartenburg. Well, they go forth of a morning with their herds; this taking the path to the hills of the Count, and that, having read the description of the boundaries between his Lord's land and that of the holy Abbot of Limburg, taking another, because learning will not willingly follow ignorance; whereupon the reader reaches a nearer and better pasture than he who hath gone about to feed upon ground that has only been trodden upon too often before, by hoof of beast and foot of man."

"Thy learning hath not done much towards clearing thy head, Gottlob, whatever it may have done for the condition of thy herd!"

"If your worship has any doubts of my being what I say, here is proof of its justice, then—I know nothing that so crams a man and confuses him as learning! He who has but one horn can take it and go his way; whereas he that hath many, may lose his herd while choosing between

instruments that are better or worse. He that hath but one sword, will draw it and slay his enemy; but he that hath much armor, may lose his life while putting on his buckler or head-piece."

"I had not thought thee so skilful in answers. And thou thinkest the good people of Duerckheim will stand neuter between the Abbey and the Count?"

"Father, if thou wilt show me by which side they will be the greatest gainers, I think I might venture to say, with some certainty, on which side they will be likely to draw the sword. Our burghers are prudent townsmen, as I have said, and it is not often that they are found fighting against their own interests."

"Thou shouldst know, son, that he who is most favored in this life, may find the balances of justice weighing against him in the next; while he who suffers in the flesh, will be most likely to find its advantage in the spirit."

"Himmel! In that case, reverend Benedictine, the most holy Abbot of Limburg himself may fare worse hereafter than even a hind who now lives like a dog!" exclaimed Gottlob, with an air of admiration and simplicity that completely misled his listener. "The one is said to comfort the body in various ways, and to know the difference between a cup of pure Rhenish and a draught of the washy liquors that come from the other side of our mountains; while the other, whether it be of necessity or inclination I will not take upon myself to say, drinks only of the spring. 'Tis a million of pities that one never knoweth which to choose, present ease with future pain, or a starving body with a happy soul! Believe me, Father Siegfried, were thy reverence to think more of these trials that befall us ignorant youths, thou wouldst not deal so heavily with the penances, as thine own severe virtue often tempts thee to do."

"What is thus done is done for thy health, future and present. By chastening the spirit in this manner, it is gradually prepared for its final purification, and thou art not a loser in the eyes of thy fellows, by leading a chaste life. Thou wilt have justice at the settlement of the great account."

"Nay, I am no greedy creditor, to dun Providence for my dues. I very well know that what will come cannot be prevented, and therefore I take patience to be a virtue.

But I hope these accounts, of which you tell us so often, are kept with sufficient respect for a poor man ; for, to deal fairly with thee, father, we have not overmuch favor in settling those of the world."

"Thou hast credit for all thy good deeds with thy fellows, Gottlob."

"I wish it were true ! To me it seems that the world is ready enough to charge, while it is as niggardly as a miser in giving credit—I never did an evil act—and as we are all mortal and frail, most holy monk, these accidents will befall even your saint or a Benedictine—that the deed itself and all its consequences were not set down against me, in letters that a short-sighted man might read ; while most of my merits—and considering I am but a cow-herd they are of respectable quality—seem to be forgotten. Now your Abbot, or his Highness the Elector, or even Count Emich——"

"The Summer Landgrave !" interrupted the monk, laughing.

"Summer or winter, as thou wilt, Father Siegfried, he is Count of Hartenburg, and a noble of Leiningen. Even he does no deed of charity, or even of simple justice, that all men do not seize upon the occasion to proclaim it, as eagerly as they endeavor to upbraid me for the accidental loss of a beast, or any other little backsliding, that may befall one, who being bold under thy holy instruction, sometimes stumbles against a sin."

"Thou art a casuist, and, at another time, I must look more closely into the temper of thy mind. At present, thou mayst purchase favor of the Church by enlisting a little more closely in her interests. I remember thy cleverness and thy wit, Gottlob, for both have been remarked in thy visits to the convent ; but, until this moment, there has not been sufficient reason to use the latter in the manner that we may fairly claim to do, considering our frequent prayers, and the other consolations afforded in thy behalf."

"Do not be too particular, Father Siegfried, for thy words reveal grievous penance !"

"Which may be much mitigated in future, if not entirely avoided, by a service that I would now propose to thee, honest Gottlob, and which I will venture to say, from my knowledge of thy reverence for holy things, as is manifest in thy attentions to the pious hermit, and thy love for

the Abbey of Limburg, thou wouldst not refuse to undertake."

"So!"

"Nay, I have as good as pledged myself to Father Bonifacius to procure either thee, or one shrewd and faithful as thee, to do a trusty service for the brotherhood."

"The latter might not be easy among the cow-herds!"

"Of that I am sure. Thy skill in the management of the beasts may yet gain thee the office of tending the ample herds of the abbey. Thou art already believed fit for the charge."

"Not to deny my own merits, sagacious father, I have already some knowledge of the pastures."

"And of the beasts, too, Gottlob; we keep good note of the characters of all who come to our confessionals. There are worse than thine among them, I do assure thee."

"And yet have I never told thee half that I might say of myself, father!"

"It is not important now. Thou knowest the state of the contest between Count Emich and our Abbey. The service that I ask of thee, son, is this; and by discharging it, with thy wonted readiness, believe me thou wilt gain favor with St. Benedict and his children. We have had reason to know, that there is a strong band of armed men in the castle, ready and anxious to assail our walls, under a vain belief that they contain riches and stores to repay the sacrilege; but we want precise knowledge of their numbers and intentions. Were we to send one of known pursuits on this errand, the Count would find means to mislead him; whereas, we think a hint of thy intelligence might purchase the Church's kindness without suspicion."

"Were Count Emich to get wind of the matter, he would not leave me an ear with which to listen to thy holy admonitions."

"Keep thine own counsel, and he will not suspect one of thy appearance. Hast no pretext for visiting the castle?"

"Nay, it would be easy to make a thousand. Here, I might say, I wished to ask the cow-herd of Lord Emich for his cunning in curing diseased hoofs, or I might pretend a wish to change my service, or, there is no want of laughing damsels in and about the hold."

"Enough: thou art he, Gottlob, for whom I have sought daily for a fortnight. Go thy way, then, without fail, and seek me after to-morrow's mass, in the Abbey."

"It may be enough on the side of Heaven, father, but men of our prudence must not forget their mortal state. Am I to risk my ears, do discredit to my simplicity, and neglect my herd, without a motive?"

"Thou wilt serve the Church, son; get favor in the eyes of our reverend Abbot, and thy courage and dexterity will be remembered in future indulgences."

"That I shall serve the Church it is well known to me, reverend Benedictine, and it is a privilege of which a cow-herd hath reason to be proud; but, by serving the Church, I shall make enemies on earth, for two sufficient reasons: first, that the Church is in no great esteem in this valley; and second, because men never love a friend for being any better than themselves. 'No, Gottlob,' used my excellent father to say, 'seem to all around thee conscious of thy unworthiness, after which thou mayst be what thou seemest. On this condition only can virtue live at peace with its fellow-creatures. But if thou wouldst have the respect of mankind,' would he say, 'set a fair price on all thou doest, for the world will not give thee credit for disinterestedness; and if thou workest for naught, it will think thou deservest naught. No,' did he shake his head and add, 'that which cometh easy is little valued, while that which is costly, do men set a price upon.'"

"Thy father was, like thyself, one that looked to his ease. Thou knowest that we inhabitants of cells do not carry silver."

"Nay, righteous Benedictine, if it were a trifle of gold, I am not one to break a bargain for so small a difference."

"Thou shalt have gold, then. On the faith of my holy calling, I will give thee an image of the Emperor in gold, shouldst thou succeed in bringing the tidings we require."

Gottlob stopped short, and kneeling, he reverently asked the monk to bless him. The latter complied, half doubting the discretion of employing such an emissary, between whose cunning and simplicity he was completely at fault. Still, as he risked nothing, except in the nature of the information he was to receive, he saw no sufficient reason for recalling the commission he had just bestowed. He gave the desired benediction, therefore; and our two conspirators descended the mountain in company, discoursing, as they went, of the business on which the cow-herd was about to proceed. When so near the road as to be in danger of observation, they separated, each taking the direction necessary to his object.

CHAPTER IV.

“And not a matron, sitting at her wheel,
But could repeat their story.—” ROGERS.

THE female, enveloped in her mantle, had so well profited by the timely interposition of Gottlob Frincke, as to quit the hermit's hut without attracting the notice of the Benedictine. But the vigilance of young Berchthold had not been so easily eluded. He stepped aside as she glided through the door, then stooping merely to catch the eye of the cow-herd, to whom he communicated his intention by a sign, he followed. Had the forester felt any doubts as to the identity of her he pursued, the light and active movement would have convinced him that age, at least, had no agency in inducing her to conceal her features. The roe-buck of his own forests scarce bounded with more agility than the fugitive fled, on first quitting the abode of the recluse; nor did her speed sensibly lessen, until she had crossed most of the melancholy camp, and reached a spot where the opening of the blue and star-lit void showed that she was at the verge of the wood, and near the margin of the summit of the mountain. Here she paused, and stood leaning against a cedar, like one whose strength was exhausted.

Berchthold had followed swiftly, but without losing that appearance of calmness and of superior physical force which gives dignity to the steps of young manhood, as compared with the timid but more attractive movements of the feebler sex. He seemed conscious of his greater powers, and unwilling to increase a flight that was already swifter than circumstances required, and which he knew to be far more owing to a vague and instinctive alarm than to any real cause for apprehension. When the speech of the female ceased, his own relaxed, and he approached the spot where she stood panting for breath, like a cautious boy, who slackens his haste in order not to give new alarm to the bird that has just alighted.

“What is there so fearful in my face, Meta, that thou fleest my presence, as I had been the spirit of one of those Pagans that they say once peopled this camp? Has not thy wont to have this dread of a youth thou hast known

from childhood, and I will say, in my own defence, known as honest and true!"

"It is not seemly in a maiden of my years—it was foolish, if not disobedient, to be here at this hour," answered the hurried girl;—"I would I had not listened to the desire of hearing more of the holy hermit's wisdom!"

"Thou art not alone, Meta!"

"That were unbecoming, truly, in my father's child!" returned the young damsel, with an expression of pride of condition, as she glanced an eye toward the fallen wall, among whose stones Berchthold saw the well-known form of a female servitor of his companion's family. "Had I carried imprudence to this pass, Master Berchthold, thou wouldst have reason to believe, in sooth, that it was the daughter of some peasant, that by chance had crossed thy footstep."

"There is little danger of that error," answered Berchthold quickly. "I know thee well; thou art Meta, the only child of Heinrich Frey, the Burgomaster of Duerckheim. None know thy quality and hopes better than I, for none have heard them oftener!"

The damsel dropped her head in a movement of natural regret and sudden repentance, and when her blue eye, softened by a ray of the moon, met the gaze of the forester, he saw that better feelings were uppermost.

"I did not wish to recount my father's honors, nor any accidental advantage of my situation, and, least of all, to thee," answered the maiden, with eagerness; "but I felt concern lest thou shouldst imagine I had forgotten the modesty of my sex and condition—or, I had fear that thou mightest—thy manner is much changed of late, Berchthold!"

"It is then without my knowledge or intention. But we will forget the past, and thou wilt tell me, what wonder hath brought thee to this suspected and dreaded moor, at an hour so unusual?"

Meta smiled, and the expression of her countenance proved, that if she had moments of uncharitable weakness, they were more the offspring of the world's opinions, than of her own frank and generous nature.

"I might retort the question on thee, Berchthold, and plead a woman's curiosity as a reason why I should be quickly answered—Why art thou here, at an hour when most young hunters sleep?"

"I am Lord Emich's forester ; but thou, as there has just been question, art a daughter of the Burgomaster of Duerckheim."

"I give thee credit for all the difference. Did my mother know that I was thus about to furnish a reason for my conduct, she would say, 'Keep thy explanations, Meta, for those who have a right to demand them!'"

"And Heinrich Frey?"

"He would be little likely to approve of either visit or explanation."

"Thy father loves me not, Meta?"

"He does not so much disapprove of thee, Master Berchthold, as that thou art only Lord Emich's forester. Wert thou as thine own parent was, a substantial burgher of our town, he might esteem thee much. But thou hast great favor with my dear mother!"

"Heaven bless her, that in her own prosperity she hath not forgotten those who have fallen! I think that, in thy heart as in thy looks, Meta, thou more resemblest thy mother than thy father."

"I would have it so. When I speak to thee of my being the child of Heinrich Frey, it is without thought of any present difference between us, I do affirm to thee, Berchthold, but rather as showing that in not forgetting my station, I am not likely to do it discredit. Nay, I know not that a forester's is a dishonorable office! They who serve the Elector in this manner are noble."

"And they who serve nobles, simple. I am but a menial, Meta, though it be in a way to do little mortification to my pride."

"And what is Count Emich but a vassal of the Elector, who, in turn, is a subject of the Emperor! Thou shalt not dishonor thyself in this manner, Berchthold, and no one say aught to vindicate thee."

"Thanks, dearest Meta. Thou art the child of my mother's oldest and closest friend, and whatever the world may proclaim of the difference that now exists between us, thy excellent heart whispers to the contrary. Thou art not only the fairest, but, in truth, the kindest and gentlest damsel of thy town!"

The daughter, only child, and consequently the heiress of the wealthiest burgher of Duerckheim, did not hear this opinion of Lord Emich's handsome forester without great secret gratification.

"And now thou shalt know the reason of this unusual visit," said Meta, when the silent pleasure excited by the last speech of young Berchthold had a little subsided; "for this have I, in some measure, promised to thee; and it would little justify thy good opinion to forget a pledge. Thou knowest the holy hermit, and the sudden manner of his appearance in the Heidenmauer?"

"None are ignorant of the latter, and thou hast already seen that I visit him in his hut."

"I shall not pretend to give, or to seek, the reason, but sure it is, that he had not been a week in the old Roman abode, when he sought occasion to show me greater notice than to any other maiden of Duerckheim, or than any merit of mine might claim."

"How! is the knave but a pretender to this sanctity, after all!"

"Thou canst not be jealous of a man of his years; and, judging by his worn countenance and hollow eyes, years too of mortification and suffering! He truly is of a character to give a youth of thy age, and gentle air, and active frame, and comely appearance, uneasiness! But I see the color in thy cheek, Master Berchthold, and will not offend thee with comparisons that are so much to thy disadvantage. Be the motive of the holy hermit what it will, on the two occasions when he visited our town, and in the visits that we maidens have often made to his cell, he hath shown kind interest in my welfare and future hopes, both as they are connected with this life, and with that to which we all hasten, although it be with steps that are not heard even by our own ears."

"It does not surprise me, that all who see and know thee, Meta, should act thus. And yet I find it very strange!"

"Nay," said the amused girl, "now thou justifyest the exact words of old Ilse, who hath often said to me, 'Take heed, Meta, and put not thy faith too easily in the language of the young townsmen; for, by looking closely into their meaning, thou wilt see that they contradict themselves. Youth is so eager to obtain its end, that it stops not to separate the true from the plausible.' These are her very words, and oft repeated too, which thou has just verified—I believe the crone fairly sleepeth on that pile of the fallen wall!"

"Disturb her not. One of her years hath great need of

rest ; nay, it would be thoughtless to rob her of this little pleasure ! ”

Meta had made a step in advance, seemingly with intent to arouse her attendant, when the hurried words and rapid action of the youth caused her to hesitate. Receding to her former attitude, beneath the shadow of the cedar, she more considerably resumed—

“ It would be ungracious, in sooth, to awaken one who hath so lately toiled up this weary hill.”

“ And she so aged, Meta ! ”

“ And one that did so much for my infancy ! I ought to go back to my father’s house, but my kind mother will overlook the delay, for she loveth Ilse little less than one of her own blood.”

“ Thy mother knoweth of this visit to the hermit’s hut, then ? ”

“ Dost think, Master Berchthold, that a Burgomaster of Duerckheim’s only child would go forth, at this hour, without permission had ? There would be great unseemliness in such secret gossiping, and a levity that would better suit thy damsels of Count Emich’s village ; they say indeed, in our town, that the castle damsels are none too nice in their manner of life.”

“ They belie us of the mountain strangely, in the towns of the plain ! I swear to thee, there is not greater modesty in thy Duerckheim palace than among our females, whether of the village or of the castle.”

“ It may be true in the main, and, for the credit of my sex, I hope it is so ; but thou wilt scarce find courage, Berchthold, to say aught in favor of her they call Gisela, the warder’s child ? More vanity have I never seen in female form ! ”

“ They think her fair, in Hartenburg.”

“ ’Tis that opinion which spoileth the creature’s manner ! Thou art much in her society, Master Berchthold, and I doubt not that use causeth thee to overlook some qualities that are not concealed from strangers. ‘ Do but regard that flaunting bird from the pass of the Jaegerthal,’ said the excellent old Ilse, one morn that we had a festival in our venerable church, to which the country round came forth in their best array ; ‘ one would imagine from its fluttering, and the movements of its feathers, that it fancied the eye of every young hunter was on its plumage, and that it dreaded the bolt of the archer unexpectedly

And yet have I known animals of this breed that did not so greatly fear the fowler's hand, if truth were said ! ”

“Thou judgest Gisela harshly ; for though of some lightness of speech, and haply not without admiration of her own beauty, the girl is far from being uncompanionable, or, at times, of agreeable discourse.”

“Nay, I do but repeat the words of Ilse, Master Berchthold ! ”

“Thy Ilse is old, and garrulous, and is like to utter foolishness.”

“This may be so—but let it be foolish, if thou wilt—the folly of my nurse is my folly. I have gained so much from her discourse, that I fear it is now too late to amend. To deal fairly with thee, she did not utter a syllable concerning thy warder's daughter that I do not believe.”

Berchthold was but little practised in the ways of the human heart. Free in the expression of his own sentiments as the air he breathed on his native hills, and entirely without thought of guilt, as respects the feeling which bound him to Meta, he had never descended into the arcana of that passion of which he was so completely the subject, without indeed knowing even the extent of his own bondage. He viewed this little ebullition of jealousy, therefore, as a generous nature regards all injustice, and he entered only the more warmly into the defence of the injured party. One of those sieve-like hearts that have been perforated a hundred times by the shots that Cupid fires, right and left, in a capital, would probably have had recourse to the same expedient, merely to observe to what extent he could trifle with the feelings of a being he professed to love.

Europeans, who are little addicted to looking into the eye of their cis-Atlantic kinsman in search of the mote, say, that the master passion of life is but a sluggish emotion in the American bosom. That those who are chiefly employed in the affairs of this world should be content with the natural course of the affections, as they arise in the honest relations of the domestic circle, is quite as probable, as it is true that they who feed their passions by vanity and variety, are mistaken when they think that casual and fickle sensations compose any of the true ingredients of that purifying and elevated sentiment, which, by investing the admired object with all that is estimable, leads us to endeavor to be worthy of the homage we insensibly

pay to virtue. In Berchthold and Meta, the reader is to look for none of that constitutional fervor, which sometimes substitutes impulse for a deeper feeling, or for any of that factitious cultivation of the theory of love, that so often tempts the neophyte to mistake his own hallucinations for the more natural attachment of sympathy and reason. For the former they lived too far north, and for the latter it might possibly be said, that fortune had cast their lot a little too far south. That subtle and nearly indefinable sympathy between the sexes, which we call love, to which all are subject, since its principle is in nature itself, exists perhaps in its purest and least conventional form precisely in the bosoms of those whom Providence has placed in the middle state, between extreme cultivation and ignorance ; between the fastidious and sickly perversion of over-indulgence, and the selfishness that is the fruit of constant appeals to exertion ; or the very condition of the two young persons that have been placed before the reader in this chapter. Enough has been seen to show that Berchthold, though exercising a menial office, had received opinions superior to his situation ; a circumstance that is sufficiently explained by the allusions already made to the decayed fortunes of his parents. His language and manner, therefore, as he generously vindicated Gisela, the daughter of the person charged to watch the approaches of Lord Emich's castle, was perhaps superior to what would have been expected in a mere forester.

"I shall not take upon myself the office of pointing out the faults of our castle beauty, if faults she hath," he said ; "but this much may I say in her defence, without fear of exceeding truth ; her father is grown gray under the livery of Leiningen, and there is not a child in the world that showeth more reverence or affection to him who gave her being, than this same bird of thine, with its flaunting plumes, and the coquetry with the archer's bolt !"

"'Tis said, a dutiful daughter will ever make an excellent and an obedient wife."

"The luckier then will he be who weds old Friedrich's child. I have known her keep the gates, deep into the night, that her father might take his rest, when the nobles have frequented the forest later than common ; aye, and to watch weary hours, when most of her years and sex would find excuses for being on their pillows. Now this have I often seen, going forth, as thou may'st be certain by my

office, in Count Emich's company, in most of his hunts. Nay, Gisela is fair, none will deny; and it may be that, among her other qualities, the girl knows it."

"She appeareth not to be the only one of thy Hartenburg pile that is aware of the fact, Master Berchthold!"

"Dost thou mean, Meta, the revelling abbé, from Paris, or the sworn soldier-monk of Rhodes, that now abide in the castle?" asked the young forester, with a simplicity that would have set the heart of a coquette at ease, by its perfect nature and openness. "Now thou touchest on the matter, I will own, though one of my office should be wary of opinions on those his master loves, but I know thy prudence, Meta—Therefore will I say, that I have half suspected these two ill-assorted servants of the church, of thinking more of the poor girl than is seemly."

"Thy poor Gisela hath cause to hang herself. Truly, were wassailers, like these thou namest, to regard me with but a free look, the Burgomaster of Duerckheim should know of their boldness!"

"Meta, they would not dare! Poor Gisela is not the offspring of a stout citizen, but the warder of Hartenburg's child, and there may be some difference in thy natures, too—nay, there is; for thou art not one of those that seek the admiration of each cavalier that passeth, but a maiden that knoweth her worth, and the meed that is her due. That thou hast, in something, wronged our beauty of the hold, I needs must say; but to compare thee with her, either in the excellence of the body or that of the mind, is what could never be done justly. If she is fair, thou art fairer; if she is witty, thou art wise!"

"Nay, do not mistake me, Berchthold, by thinking that I have uttered aught against thy warder's daughter that is harsh and unseemly. I know the girl's cleverness, and moreover I am willing to acknowledge, that one cruelly placed by fortune in a condition of servitude, like her's, may find it no easy matter to be always what one of her sex and years could wish. I dare to say, that Gisela, did fortune and opportunity permit, would do no discredit to her breeding and looks, both of which, sooth to say, are somewhat above her condition."

"And thou saidst, thy mother knew of this visit to the hermit?"

"And said truth. My mother has never made objection

to any reverence paid by her daughter to the Church or to its servants."

"That hath she not!—Thou art amongst the most frequent of those who resort to the Abbey in quest of holy offices thyself, Meta!"

"Am I not a Christian? Wouldst have a well-respected maiden forget her duties?"

"I say not that; but there is discourse amongst us hunters, that of late the prior hath much preferred his young nephew, Brother Hugo, to the duty of quieting the consciences of the penitents. It were better that some father, whose tonsure hath a ring of gray, were put into the confessional, in a church so much frequented by the young and fair of Duerckheim."

"Thou wouldst do well to write of this to the Bishop of Worms, or to our holy Abbot, in thine own scholarly hand. Thou hast the clerkly gifts, Master Berchthold, and might persuade!"

"I would that the little I have done in this way had not so failed of its design. Thou hast had frequent proofs of its sincerity, if not of its skill, Meta."

"Well, this is idle, and leads me to forget the hermit: My mother—I know not why—and now thou makest me think of it, I find it different from her common rule; but it is certain that she in nowise discourages these visits to the Heidenmauer. We are very young, Berchthold, and may not yet understand all that enters into older and wiser heads!"

"It is strange that the holy man should seek just us! If he most urges his advice on you among the damsels of the town, he most gives his counsel to me among the youths of the Jaegerthal!"

There was a charm in this idea which held these two young and unpractised minds in sweet thralldom for many fleeting minutes. They conversed of the unexplained sympathy between the man of God and themselves, long and with undiminishing interest in the subject, for it seemed to both that it contained a tie to unite them still closer to each other. Whatever philosophy and experience may pretend on such subjects, it is certain that man is disposed to be superstitious in respect to the secret influences that guide his fortunes, in the dark passage of the world. Whether it be the mystery of the unforeseen future, or the consciousness of how much of even his most prized suc-

cess is the result of circumstances that he never could or did control, or whether God, with a view to his own harmonious and sublime ends, has implanted this principle in the human breast, in order to teach us dependence on a superior power, it is certain that few reach a state of mind so calculating and reasoning as not to trust some portion of that which is to come, to the chances of Fortune, or to Providence ; for so we term the directing power, as the mind clings to or rejects the immediate agency of the Deity, in the conduct of the subordinate concerns of life. In the age of which we write, intelligence had not made sufficient progress to elevate ordinary minds above the arts of necromancy. Men no longer openly consulted the entrails of brutes, in order to learn the will of fate, but they often submitted to a dictation scarcely less beastly, and few indeed were they who were able to separate piety from superstition, or the grand dispensations of Providence from the insignificant interests of selfishness. It is not surprising, therefore, that Berchthold and Meta should cling to the singular interest that the hermit manifested in them respectively, as an omen propitious to their common hopes ; common, for though the maiden had not so far relinquished the reserve she still deemed essential to her sex, as to acknowledge all she felt, that subtle instinct which unites the young and innocent left little doubt in the mind of either, of the actual state of the other's inclinations.

Old Ilse had consequently ample time to rest her frame, after the painful toil of the ascent between the town and the camp. When Meta at length approached to arouse her, the garrulous woman broke out in exclamations of surprise at the shortness of the interview with the hermit, for the soundness of her slumbers left her in utter ignorance of the appearance and disappearance of Berchthold.

"It is but a moment, Meta, dear," she said, "since we came up the hill, and I fear thou hast not given sufficient heed to the wise words of the holy man. We should not reject a wholesome draught because it proves bitter to the mouth, child, but swallow all to the last drop, when we think there is healing in the cup. Didst deal fairly by the hermit, and tell him honestly of thy evil nature?"

"Thou forgettest, Ilse, the hermit has not even the torture, and cannot shrive and pardon."

"Nay, nav—I know not that! A hermit is a man of

God ; and a man of God is holy ; and any Christian may, aye, and should pardon ; and as to shricing, give me a self-denying recluse, who passes his time in prayer, mortifying soul and body, before any monk of Limburg, say I ! There is more virtue in one blessing from such a man, than in a dozen from a carousing Abbot—I know not but I might say fifty.”

“But I had his blessing, nurse.”

“Well, that is comforting, and we have not wearied our limbs for naught ; but thou shouldst have told him of thy wish to wear the laced bodice, at the last mass, in order that thy equals might envy thy beauty. It would have been wholesome to have acknowledged that sin, at least.”

“But he questioned me not of my sins. All his discourse was of my father’s house, and of my good mother, and—and of other matters.”

“Thou shouldst then have edged the bodice in among the other matters. Have I not always forewarned thee, Meta, of the danger of pride, and of stirring envy in the bosom of a companion ? There is naught more uncomfortable than envy, as I know by experience. Oh ! I am no longer young ; and come to me if thou wouldst wish to know what envy is, or any other dangerous vice, and I warrant thee thou shalt hear it well explained ! Aye, thou wert very wrong not to have spoken of the bodice !”

“Had it been fit to confess, I might have found more serious sins to own than any that belong to dress.”

“I know not that ! Dress is a great beguiler of the young heart, and of the handsome face. If thou hast beauty in thy house, break thy mirrors that the young should not know it, is what I have heard a thousand times ; and as thou art both young and fair, I will repeat it, though all Duerckheim gainsay my words, thou art in danger if thou knowest it. No, hadst thou told the hermit of that bodice, it might have done much good. What matters it to such a man, whether he hath the tonsure or not ? He hath prayers, and fastings, and midnight thought, and great bodily suffering, and these are surely worth as much hair as hath ever fallen from all the monks in the Palatinate. I would that thou hadst told him of that bodice, child !”

“Since thou so wishest it, at our next meeting it shall be said, dear Ilse ; so set thy heart at peace.”

“This will give thy dear mother great pleasure ; else.

why should she consent that a daughter of her's should visit a heathenish camp, at so late an hour? I warrant thee that she thought of the bodice!"

"Do cease speaking of the garment, nurse; my thoughts are bent on something else."

"Well, if indeed thou thinkest of something else, it may be amiss to say more at present, though, Heaven it knows! thou hast great occasion to recall that vain-glorious mass to thy mind. How suddenly thy communion with the hermit ended to-night, Meta!"

"We have not been long on the mountain, truly, Ilse. But we must hasten back, lest my mother should be uneasy."

"And why should she be so? Am I not with thee? Is age nothing, and experience, and prudence, and an old head, aye, and, for that matter, an old body, too, and a good memory, and such eyes as no other in Duerckheim of my years hath—I say of my years, for thou hast better; and thy dear mother's are little worse than thine—but of my years, few have their equal. At thy age, girl, I was not the old Ilse, but the lively Ilse, and the active, and, God forgive me if there be vain-glory in the words! but truth should always be spoken—the handsome Ilse, and this too without aid from any such bodice as that of thine."

"Wilt never forget the bodice! here, lean on me, nurse, or thy foot may fail thee in the steep descent."

Here they began to descend, and as they were now at a point of the path where much caution was necessary, the conversation in a great measure ceased.

He who visits Duerckheim now, will find sufficient remaining evidence to show that the town formerly extended more towards the base of the mountain than its present site would prove. There are the ruins of walls and towers among the vineyards that ornament the foot of the hill, and tradition speaks of fortifications that have long since disappeared, rendered useless by those improvements in warfare that have robbed so many other strong places of their importance. Then, every group of houses on an eminence was more or less a place of defence; but the use of gunpowder and artillery centuries ago rendered all these targets useless, and he who would now seek a citadel, is most sure to find it buried in some plain or morass. The world has reached another crisis in improvement, for the introduction of steam is likely to alter all its systems of

offence and defence both by land and sea ; but, be the future as it may, the skill of the engineer had not so far ripened at the period of our tale as to prevent Meta and her attendant from entering within walls of ancient construction, clumsily adapted to meet the exigencies of the imperfect state of the existing art. As the hour was early, they had no difficulty in reaching the Burgomaster's door without attracting remark.

CHAPTER V.

“What news ?”

“None, my lord ; but that the world is grown honest.”

“Then is doomsday near !”—*Hamlet.*

WITHIN the whole of these widely extended states, there is scarcely a single vestige of the manner of life led by those who first settled in the wilderness. Little else is found to arrest the eye of the antiquary in the shape of a ruin, except the walls of some fortress or the mounds of an intrenchment of the war of independence. We have, it is true, some faint remains of times still more remote ; and there are even a few circumvallations, or other inventions of defence, that are believed to have once been occupied by the red man ; but in no part of the country did there ever exist an edifice, of either a public or a private nature, that bore any material resemblance to a feudal castle. In order, therefore, that the reader shall have as clear a picture as our feeble powers can draw, of the hold occupied by the sturdy baron who is destined to act a conspicuous part in the remainder of this legend, it has become necessary to enter at some length into a description of the surrounding localities, and of the building itself. We say of the reader, for we profess to write only for the amusement—fortunate shall we be if instruction may be added—of our own countrymen : should others be pleased to read these crude pages, we shall be flattered and of course grateful ; but with this distinct avowal of our object in holding the pen, we trust they will read with the necessary amount of indulgence.

And here we shall take occasion to hold one moment's communion with that portion of the reading public of all

nations, that, as respects a writer, composes what is termed the world. Let it not be said of us, because we make frequent reference to opinions and circumstances as they exist in our native land, that we are profoundly ignorant of the existence of all others. We make these references, crime though it be in hostile eyes, because they best answer our end in writing at all, because they allude to a state of society most familiar to our own minds, and because we believe that great use has hitherto been made of the same things, to foster ignorance and prejudice. Should we unheedingly betray the foible of national vanity—that foul and peculiar blot of American character! we solicit forgiveness; urging, in our own justification, the aptitude of a young country for falling insensibly into the vein of imitation, and praying the critical observer to overlook any blunders in this way, if perchance we should not manifest that felicity of execution which is the fruit only of great practice. Hitherto we believe that our modesty cannot justly be impeached. As yet we have left the cardinal virtues to mankind in the gross, never, to our knowledge, having written of “American courage,” or “American honesty,” nor yet of “American beauty,” nor haply of “American manliness,” nor even of “American strength of arm,” as qualities abstracted and not common to our fellow-creatures; but have been content, in the unsophisticated language of this western clime, to call virtue, virtue—and vice, vice. In this we well know how much we have fallen short of numberless but nameless classical writers of our time, though we do not think we are greatly losers by the forbearance, because we have sufficient proof that when we wish to make our pages unpleasant to the foreigner, we can effect that object by much less imposing allusions to national merits; since we have good reason to believe, there exists a certain querulous class of readers who consider even the most delicate and reserved commendations of this western world as so much praise unreasonably and dishonestly abstracted from themselves. As for that knot in our own fair country who aim at success by flattering the stranger, and who hope to shine in their own little orbits by means of borrowed light, we commit them to the correction of a reproof which is certain to come, and, in their cases, to come embittered by the consciousness of its being merited by a servility as degrading as it is unnatural. As they dive deeper into the

secrets of the human heart, they will learn there is a healthful feeling that cannot be repulsed with impunity, and that as none are so respected as they who fearlessly and frankly maintain their rights, so none are so contemned as those who ignobly desert them.

During the time that Berchthold was holding converse with Meta, on the mountain of the Heidenmauer, Emich of Leiningen was at rest in his castle of Hartenburg. It has already been said, that the hold was of massive masonry, the principal material being the reddish sand-stone, that is so abundantly found in nearly the whole region of the ancient Palatinate. The building had grown with time, and that which had originally been a tower had swelled into a formidable and extensive fortress. In the ages which succeeded the empire of Charlemagne, he who could rear one of these strong places, and maintain it in opposition to his neighbors, became noble, and in some measure a sovereign. He established his will as law for the contiguous territory, and they who could not enjoy their own lands, without submitting to his pleasure, were content to purchase protection by admitting their vassalage. No sooner was one of these local lords firmly established in his hold, by receiving service and homage from their husbandmen, than he began to quarrel with his nearest neighbor of his own condition. The victor necessarily grew more powerful by his conquests, until, from being the master of one castle and one village, he became in process of time the master of many. In this manner did minor barons swell into power and sovereignty, even mighty potentates tracing their genealogical and political trees into roots of this wild growth. There still stands on an abrupt and narrow ledge of land in the confederation of Switzerland and in the Canton of Argovie, a tottering ruin, that, in past ages, was occupied by a knight, who from his aerie overlooked the adjoining village, and commanded the services of its handful of boors. This ruined castle was called Hapsbourg, and is celebrated as the cradle of that powerful family which has long sat upon the throne of the Cæsars, and which now rules so much of Germany and Upper Italy. The King of Prussia traces his line to the House of Hohenzollern, the offspring of another castle; and numberless are the instances in which he who thus laid the corner-stone of a strong place, in ages when security was only to be had by good walls, also laid

the foundation of a long line of prosperous and puissant princes.

Neither the position of the castle of Hartenburg, however, nor the period in which it was founded, was likely to lead to results as great as these just named. As has been said, it commanded a pass important for local purposes, but not of so much moment as to give him who held the hold any material rights beyond its immediate influence. Still, as the family of Leiningen was numerous, and had other branches and other possessions in more favored portions of Germany, Count Emich was far from being a mere mountain chief. The feudal system had become methodized long before his birth, and the laws of the Empire secured to him many villages and towns on the plain, as the successor of those who had obtained them in more remote ages. He had recently claimed even a higher dignity, and wider territories, as the heir of a deceased kinsman; but in this attempt to increase his powers, and to elevate his rank, he had been thwarted by a decision of his peers. It was to this abortive assumption of dignity, that he owed the sobriquet of the Summer Landgrave; for such was the rank he had claimed, and the period for which he had been permitted to bear it.

With this knowledge of the power of their family, the reader will not be surprised to hear that the castle of the Counts of Hartenburg, or, to be more accurate, of the Counts of Hartenburg-Leiningen, was on a commensurate scale. Perched on the advanced spur of the mountain, just where the valley was most confined, and at a point where the little river made a short bend, the pass beneath lay quite at the mercy of the archer on its battlements. In the fore-ground, all that part of the edifice which came into the view was military, and, in some slight degree, fitted to the imperfect use that was then made of artillery; while in the rear arose that maze of courts, chapels, towers, gates, portcullises, state-rooms, offices, and family apartments, that marked the usages and tastes of the day. The hamlet which lay in the dell, immediately beneath the walls of the salient towers, or bastions, for they partook of both characters, was insignificant, and of little account in estimating the wealth and resources of the feudal lord. These came principally from Duerckheim, and the fertile plains beyond, though the forest was not without its value, in a country in which the axe had so long been used.

We have said that Emich of Leiningen was taking his rest in the hold of Hartenburg. Let the reader imagine a massive building, in the centre of the confused pile we have mentioned, rudely fashioned to meet the wants of the domestic economy of that age, and he will get a nearer view of the interior. The walls were wainscoted, and had much uncouth and massive carving; the halls were large and gloomy, loaded with armor, and at this moment pregnant with armed men; the saloons of a medium size which suited a baronial state, and all the appliances of that mingled taste in which comfort and luxury, as now understood, were unknown, but which was not without a portion of the effect that is produced by an exhibition of heavy magnificence. With few but signal exceptions, Germany, even at this hour, is not a country remarkable for the elegancies of domestic life. Its very palaces are of simple decoration, its luxuries of a homebred and inartificial kind, and its taste is rarely superior, and indeed not always equal, to our own. There is still a shade of the Gothic in the habits and opinions of this constant people, who seem to cultivate the subtle refinements of the mind, in preference to the more obvious and material enjoyments which address themselves to the senses.

Quaint and complicated ornaments, wrought by the patient industry of a race proverbial for this description of ingenuity; swords, daggers, morions, cuirasses, and all sorts of defensive armor then in use; such needle-work, as it befitted a noble dame to produce; pictures that possessed most of the faults and few of the beauties of the Flemish school; furniture that bore some such relation to the garniture of the palaces of electors and kings, as the decorations of a village drawing-room in our own time, bear to those of the large towns; a profuse display of plate, on which the arms of Leiningen were embossed and graven in every variety of style, with genealogical trees and heraldic blazonry in colors, were the principal features.

Throughout the whole pile, there was little appearance, however, of the presence of females, or even of the means of their accommodation. Few of that sex were seen in the corridors, or offices, or courts; though men crowded the place in unusual numbers. The latter were chiefly grim and whiskered warriors, who loitered in the halls, or in the more public parts of the castle, like idlers waiting for the expected movement of exertion. None among them

were armed at all points, though this carelessly wore his morion, that had buckled on a breast-plate, and another leaned listlessly on his arquebuse or handled his pike. Here a group exercised, in levity, with their several weapons of offence ; there a jester amused a crowd of sluggish listeners, with his ribaldry and humor : and numberless were those who quaffed of the Rhenish of their lord. Although this continent had then been discovered, the goodly portion which has since fallen to our heritage was still in the hands of its native proprietors ; and the plant, so long known as the weed of Virginia, but which has since become a staple of so many other countries in this hemisphere, was not in its present general use amongst the Germans ; else would it have been our duty to finish this hasty sketch, by enveloping it all in mist. Notwithstanding the general air of indifference and negligence, which reigned within the walls of Hartenburg without the gates, in the turrets, and on the advanced towers, there was the appearance of more than the customary watchfulness. Had one been there to note the circumstance, he would have seen, in addition to the sentries who always guarded the approaches of the castle, several swift-footed spies on the look-out, in the hamlet, on the rocks of the mountain-side, and along the winding paths ; and as all eyes were turned towards the valley in the direction of Limburg, it was evident that the event they awaited was expected to arrive from that quarter.

While such was the condition of his hold and of so strong a body of his vassals, Count Emich himself had retired from observation, to one of the quaint, half-rude, half-magnificent saloons of the place. The room was lighted by twenty tapers, and other well-known signs indicated the near approach of guests. He paced the large apartment with a heavy and armed heel ; while care, or at least severe thought, contracted the muscles around a hard and iron brow, which bore evident marks of familiar acquaintance with the casque. Perhaps this is the only country of Christendom, even now, in which the profession of the law is a pursuit still more honorable and esteemed than that of arms—the best proof of a high and enviable civilization—but at the age of our narrative, the gentleman that was not of the Church, the calling which nearly monopolized all the learning of the times, was of necessity a soldier. Emich of Leiningen carried arms therefore as much

in course, as the educated man of this century reads his Horace or Virgil ; and as nature had given him a vigorous frame, a hardy constitution, and a mind whose indifference to personal suffering amounted at times to ruthlessness, he was more successful in his trade of violence, than many a pale and zealous student proves in the cultivation of letters.

The musing Count scarce raised his looks from the oaken floor he trod, as menial after menial appeared, moving with light step in the presence of one so dreaded and yet so singularly loved. At length a female, busy in some of the little offices of her sex, glided before his half-unconscious sight. The youth, the bloom, the playful air, the neat coif, the tight bodice, and the ample folds of the falling garments, at length seemed to fill his eye with the form of his companion.

"Is it thou, Gisela?" he said, speaking mildly, as one addresses a favored dependant. "How fareth it with the honest Karl?"

"I thank my lord the Count, his aged and wounded servant hath less of pain than is commonly his lot. The limb he has lost in the service of the House of Leining-en——"

"No matter for the leg, girl—thou art too apt to dwell upon that mischance of thy parent."

"Were my lord the Count to leave a limb on the field, it might be missed when he was hurried!"

"Thinkest, thou, child, that my tongue would never address the Emperor without naming the defect? Go to, Gisela; thou art a calculating hussy, and rarely permittest occasion to pass without allusion to this growing treasure of thy family. Are my people actively on the watch, with or without their limbs?"

"They are as their natures and humors tend. Blessed Saint Ursula knows where the officers of the country have picked up so ungainly a band, as these that now inhabit Hartenburg! One drinketh, from the time his eyes open in the morn until they shut at even; another sweareth worse than the northern warriors that do these ravages in the Palatinate; this a foul dealer in ribaldry: that a glutton who never moveth lip but to swallow; and none, nay, not a swaggerer of them all, hath civil word for a maiden, though she be known as one esteemed in their master's household."

"They are my vassals, girl, and stouter men at need are not mustered in Germany."

"Stout in speech, and insolent of look, my Lord Count, but most odious company to all, of modest demeanor and of good intentions, in the hold."

"Thou hast been humored by thy mistress, girl, until thou sometimes forgettest discretion. Go and look my guests are informed that the hour of the banquet is at hand;—I await the pleasure of their presence."

Gisela, whose natural pertness had been somewhat heightened by an indulgent mistress, and in whom consciousness of more beauty than ordinarily falls to the share of females of her condition had produced freedom of language that sometimes amounted to temerity, betrayed her discontent in a manner very common to her sex, when it is undisciplined, or little restrained by a wholesome education. She pouted, taking care however that Emich's eye was again turned to the floor, tossed her head and quitted the room. Left to himself, the Count relapsed into his reverie. In this manner did several minutes pass unheeded.

"Dreaming, as usual, noble Emich, of escalades and excommunication!" cried a gay voice at his elbow, the speaker having entered the saloon unseen—"of revengeful priests, of vassalage, of shaven abbots, the confessional and penance dire, thy rights redressed, the frowning conclave, the Abbey cellar, thy morion, revenge, and, to sum up all, in a word that covers every deadly sin, that fallen angel the Devil!"

Emich forced a grim smile at this unceremonious and comprehensive salutation, accepting the offered hand of him who uttered it, however, with the frank freedom of a boon companion.

"Thou art right welcome, Albrecht," he replied, "for the moment is near when my ghostly guests should arrive; and to deal fairly by thee, I never feel myself quite equal to a single combat of wits with the pious knaves; but thy support will be enough, though the whole Abbey community were of the party."

"Aye, we are akin, we sons of Saint John and these bastards of Saint Benedict. Though more martial than your monks of the hill, we of the island are sworn to quite as many virtues. Let me see," he added, counting on his fingers with an air of bold licentiousness; "firstly are we

vowed to celibacy, and your Benedictine is no less so—then are we self-dedicated to chastity, as is your Limburg monk ; next we respect our oaths, as does your Father Bonifacius ; then both are servants of the holy cross ;” by a singular influence the speaker and the Count made the sacred symbol on their bosoms, as the former uttered the word, “and, doubt it not, I shall be the equal of the reverend brotherhood. They say sin can match sin, and saint should surely be saint’s equal ! But, Emich, thou art graver than becometh a hot carousal, like this we meditate !”

“And thou gay as if about to gallant the dames of Rhodes to one of thy island festivals !”

The Knight of Saint John regarded his attire with complacency, strutting by the side of his host, as the latter resumed his walk, with the air of a bird of admired plumage. Nor was the remark of the Count of Hartenburg misapplied, since his kinsman and guest had, in reality, expended more labor on his toilet than was customary in the absence of females, and in that rude hold. Unlike the stern and masculine Emich, who rarely divested himself of all his warlike gear, the sworn defender of the Cross appeared entirely in a peaceful guise, if the long rapier that dangled at his side, and which to a much later period formed an indispensable accompaniment of one of gentle condition, could be excepted from the implements of war. His doublet, fully decorated with embroidery, fringes, and loops, and dotted with buttons, was of a pale orange stuff, that was puffed and distended about his person, in the liberal amplitude of the prevailing fashion. The nether garment, which scarce appeared, however, essential as it might be, was of the same material, and cut with a similar expenditure of cloth. The hose were pink, and, rolling far above the knee, gave the effect of a rich coloring to the whole picture. He wore shoes whose upper-leather rose high against the small of the leg, buckles that covered the instep, and about the throat and wrists there was a lavish display of lace. The well-known Maltese cross dangled by a red ribbon, at a button-hole of the doublet ; not above the heart, as is the custom at present among the chevaliers of the other hemisphere, but, by a vagary of taste, so low as to demonstrate, if indeed, there is any allusion intended by the accidental position of these jewels, that the honorable badge was assumed in direct reference to that material

portion of the human frame which is believed to be the repository of good cheer; an interpretation that, in the case of Albrecht of Viederbach, the knight in question, was perhaps much nearer to the truth than he would have been willing to own. After poisoning himself, first on the point of one shoe, and then on the other, smoothing his ruffles, shoving the rapier more aside, and otherwise adjusting his attire to his mind, the professed soldier of Saint John of Jerusalem pursued the discourse.

"I am decent, kinsman," he replied; "fit to be a guest at thy hospitable board, if thou wilt, in the absence of its fair mistress, but beyond that unworthy to be named. As for the dames of our unhappy and violated Rhodes, dear cousin, thou knowest little of their humors, if thou fanciest that this rude guise would have any charm in their refined eyes. Our knights were used to bring into the island the taste and improvements of every distant land; and small though it be, there are few portions of the earth, in which the human arts, for so I call the decoration of the human body, flourished more than in our circumscribed, valiant, and much-regretted Rhodes. Thus was it, at least, until the fell Ottoman triumphed!"

"Fore God, I had thought thee sworn to all sorts of modesty, in speech, life, and other abstinences!"

"And art thou not sworn, most mutinous Emich, to obey thy liege lords, the Emperor and the Elector—nay, for certain of thy lands and privileges, art thou not bound to knight's service and obedience to the holy Abbot of Limburg?"

"God's curse on him and on all the others of that grasping brotherhood!"

"Aye, that is but the natural consequence of thy oath, as this doublet is of mine. If the rigid performance of a vow is as agreeable to the body, as we are taught it may be healthful to the soul, Count of Leiningen, where would be the merit of observance? I never don these graceful garments, but a wholesome remembrance of watchful nights passed on the ramparts, of painful sieges and watery trenches, or of sickly cruises against the Mussulmans, do not present themselves in the shape of past penances. In this manner do we sweeten sin, by our bodily pains, and by the memory of hours of virtuous hardships!"

"By the three sainted Kings of Koeln, and the eleven thousand virgins of that honored city, Master Albrecht!"

but thou wert much favored in thy narrow island, if it were permitted to thee to sin in this fashion, with the certainty of tempering punishment with so light service! These griping monks of Limburg make much of their favors, and he who would go with a safe skin, must needs look to an indulgence had and well paid for, in advance. I know not the number of goodly casks of the purest Rhenish that little sallies of humor may have cost me, first and last, in this manner of princely expenditure; but certain am I, that did occasion offer, the united tributes would leave little empty space in Prince Friedrich's vaunted Tun, in his ample cellars of Heidelberg!"

"I have often heard of that royal receptacle of generous liquor, and have meditated a pilgrimage in honor of its capacity. Does the Elector receive noble travellers with a hospitality suited to his rank and means?"

"That doth he, and right willingly, though this war presses sorely, and giveth him other employment. Thy wayfaring will not be weary, for thou mayst see the towers of Heidelberg from off these hills, and a worthy steed might be pricked from this court of mine into that of Duke Friedrich in a couple of hours of hard riding."

"When the merits of thy cellar are exhausted, noble Ernich, it will be in season to put the Tun to the proof," replied the Knight of Rhodes, "as our esteemed friend here, the Abbé, will maintain, in the face of all the reformers with which our Germany is infested."

In introducing another character, we claim the reader's patience for a moment of digression. Whatever may be said of the merits and legality of the Reformation, effected chiefly by the courage of Luther (and we are neither sectarian nor unbeliever, to deny the sacred origin of the church from which he dissented,) it is very generally admitted, that the long and undisputed sway of the prevailing authority of that age, had led to abuses, which called loudly for some change in its administration. Thousands of those who had devoted their lives to the administrations of the altar, were quite as worthy of the sacred office as it falls to man's lot to become; but thousands had assumed the tonsure, the cowl, or the other symbols of ecclesiastical duty, merely to enjoy the immunities and facilities the character conferred. A long and nearly undisputed monopoly of letters, the influence obtained by the unnatural union between secular and religious power, and the de-

pendent condition of the public mind, the legitimate consequence of both, induced all who aspired to moral pre-eminence, to take this, the most certain, because the most beaten, of the paths that led to this species of ascendancy. It is not alone to the religion of Christendom, as it existed in the time of Luther, that we are to look for an example of the baneful consequence of spiritual and temporal authority, as blended in human institutions. Christian or Mahomedan, Catholic or Protestant, the evil comes in every case from the besetting infirmity which tempts the strong to oppress the weak, and the powerful to abuse their trusts. Against this failing there seems to be no security but an active and certain responsibility. So long as the severe morality required of its ministers, by the Christian faith, is uncorrupted by any gross admixture of worldly advantage, there is reason to believe that the altar, at least, will escape serious defilement; but no sooner are these fatal enemies admitted to the sanctuary, than a thousand spirits, prompted by cupidity, rush rashly into the temple, willing to bear with the outward exactions of the faith, in order to seek its present and visible rewards.

However pure may be a social system, or a religion, in the commencement of its power, the possession of an undisputed ascendancy lures all alike into excesses fatal to consistency, to justice, and to truth. This is a consequence of the independent exercise of human volition, that seems nearly inseparable from human frailty. We gradually come to substitute inclination and interest for right, until the moral foundations of the mind are sapped by indulgence, and what was once regarded with the aversion that wrong excites in the innocent, gets to be not only familiar, but justifiable by expediency and use. There is no more certain symptom of the decay of the principles requisite to maintain even our imperfect standard of virtue, than when the plea of necessity is urged in vindication of any departure from its mandate, since it is calling in the aid of ingenuity to assist the passions, a coalition that rarely fails to lay prostrate the feeble defences of a tottering morality.

It is no wonder, then, that the world, at a period when religious abuses drove even churchmen reluctantly to seek relief in insubordination, should exhibit bold instances of the flagrant excesses we have named. Military ambition, venality, love of ease, and even love of dissipation, equally sought the mantle of religion as cloaks to their several ob-

jects, and if the reckless cavalier was willing to flesh his sword on the body of the infidel, in order that he might live in men's estimation as a hero of the cross, so did the trifler, the debauchee, and even the wit of the capital, consent to obtain circulation by receiving an impression which gave currency to all coin, whether of purer or of baser metal, since it bore the outward stamp of the Church of God.

"Reformers, or rather revilers, for that is the term they most merit," returned the Abbé, alluded to in the last speech of Albrecht of Veiderbach, "I consign without remorse to the devil. As for this pledge of our brave Knight of Saint John, noble Count Emich, so far as I am concerned, it shall be redeemed: for I am certain the cellars of Heidelberg can resist a heavier inroad than any that is likely to invade them by such means. But I am late from my chamber, and I had hoped, ere this, to have seen our brethren of Limburg! I hope no unnecessary misunderstanding is likely to deprive us of the satisfaction of their presence, Lord Count?"

"Little fear of that, so far as it may depend on any disappointment in a feast. If ever the devil tempted these monks of the hill, it has been in the shape of gluttony. Were I to judge by the experience of forty years passed in their neighborhood, I should think they deem abstinence an eighth deadly sin."

"Your Benedictine is privileged to consider hospitality a virtue, and the Abbot has fair license for the indulgence of some little cheer. We will not judge them harshly, therefore, but form our opinions of their merits by their deeds. Thou hast many servitors without, to do them honor to-night, Lord Emich."

The Count of Leiningen frowned, and, ere he answered, his eye exchanged a glance with that of his kinsman, which the Abbé might have interpreted into a hidden meaning, had it attracted his observation.

"My people gather loyally about their lord, for they have heard of his succor sent by the Elector to uphold the lazy Benedictines," was the reply. "Four hundred mercenaries lie within the Abbey walls this night, Master Latouche, and it should not cause surprise that the vassals of Emich of Hartenburg are ready with hand and sword to do service in his defence. God's mercy! The cunning priests may pretend alarm, but if any here hath cause to

be afraid, truly it is the rightful and wronged lord of the Jaegerthal !”

“Thy situation, Cousin of Hartenburg,” observed the wearer of the cross of Saint John, “is, in sooth, one of masterly diplomacy. Here dost thou stand at sword’s point with the Abbot of Limburg, ready at need to exchange deadly thrusts, and to put this long-disputed supremacy on the issue of battle, while thou callest on the keeper of thy cellar to bring forth the choicest of its contents, in order to do hospitality and honor to thy mortal foe ! This beareth, in all niceties, Monsieur Latouche, the situation of an abbé of thy quality, who is scarce churchman enough to merit salvation, nor yet deep enough in sin to be incontinently damned in the general mass of evil-doers.”

“It is to be hoped that we shall share the common lot of mortals, which is to receive more grace than they merit,” returned the Abbé, a title that in fact scarce denoted one seriously devoted to the Church. “But I trust this present meeting between the hostile powers may prove amicable ; for, not to conceal the truth, unlike our friend the Knight here, I am of none of the belligerent orders.”

“Hark !” exclaimed the host, lifting a finger to command attention : “Heard ye aught ?”

“There is much of the music of thy growlers in the courts, cousin, and some oaths in a German that needs be translated to be understood ; but that blessed signal the supper-bell is still mute.”

“Go to !—’Tis the Abbot of Limburg and his brethren, Fathers Siegfried and Cuno. Let us to the portal, to do them usual honor.”

As this was welcome news to both the Knight and the Abbé, they manifested a suitable desire to be foremost in paying the required attention to a personage, as important in that region as the rich and powerful chief of the neighboring religious establishment.

CHAPTER VI.

“Why not ?—The deeper sinner, better saint.”—BYRON.

A WILD and plaintive note had been sounded on a horn far in the valley towards the hill of Limburg. This melodious music was of common occurrence, for of all that

dwell in Europe, they who inhabit the banks of the Rhine, the Elbe, the Oder, and the Danube, with their tributaries, are the most addicted to the cultivation of sweet sounds. We hear much of the harshness of the Teutonic dialects, and of the softness of those of Latin origin ; but, Venice and the regions of the Alps excepted, nature has amply requited for the inequality that exists between the languages, by the difference in the organs of speech. He who journeys in those distant lands must, as a rule, expect to hear German warbled and Italian in a grand crash, though exceptions are certainly to be found in both cases. But music is far more common on the vast plains of Saxony than on the Campagna Felice, and it is no uncommon occurrence to be treated by a fair-haired postilion of the former country, as he slowly mounts a hill, with airs on the horn that would meet with favor in the orchestra of a capital. It was one of these melancholy and peculiar strains which now gave the signal to the spies of Count Emich that his clerical guests had quitted the convent.

“ Heard ye aught, brothers ? ” demanded Father Bonifacius of the companions who rode at his side, nearly at the same moment that the Lord of Leiningen put the same question in his hold ; “ that horn spoke in a meaning strain ! ”

“ We may be defeated in our wish to reach the castle suddenly,” returned the monk, already known to the reader as Father Siegfried ; “ but though we fail in looking into Count Emich’s secret with our own eyes, I have engaged one to do that office for us, and in a manner, I trust, that shall put us on the scent of his designs. Courage, most holy Abbot, the cause of God is not likely to fail for want of succor. When were the meek and righteous ever deserted ? ”

The Abbot of Limburg ejaculated, in a manner to express little faith in any miraculous interposition in behalf of his cure, and he drew about him the mantle that served in some degree to conceal his person, spurring the beast he rode only the quicker, from a feverish desire, if possible, to outstrip the sounds, which he intuitively felt were intended to announce his approach. The prelate was not deceived, for no sooner did the wild notes reach the castle, than the signal, which had caught the attention of its owner, was communicated to those within the walls.

At the expected summons there was a general movement

among the idlers of the courts. Subordinate officers passed among the men, hurrying those away to their secret lodging places who were intractable from excess of liquor, and commanding the more obedient to follow. In a very few minutes, and long before the monks, who, however, pricked their beasts to the utmost, had time to get near the hamlet even, all in the hold was reduced to a state of tranquil repose; the castle resembling the abode of any other powerful baron, in moments of profound security. Emich had seen to this disposition of his people in person, taking strict caution that no straggler should appear, to betray the preparations that existed within his walls. When this wise precaution was observed, he proceeded, with his two companions, to take a station near the door of the building more especially appropriated to the accommodation of himself and his friends, in order to await the arrival of the monks.

The moon had ascended high enough to illuminate the mountain-side, and to convert the brown towers and ramparts of Hartenburg into picturesque forms, relieved by gloomy shadows. The signals appeared to have thrown all who dwelt in the hamlet, as well as they who inhabited the frowning hold which overhung that secluded spot, into mute attention. For a few minutes the quiet was so deep and general, that the murmuring of the rivulet which meandered through the meadows was audible. Then came the swift clattering of hoofs.

"Our churchmen are in haste to taste thy Rhenish, noble Emich," said Albrecht of Viederbach, who rarely thought; "or is it a party of their sumpter mules that I hear in the valley!"

"Were the Abbot about to journey to some other convent of his order, or were he ready to visit his spiritual master of Spires, there is no doubt that many such cattle would be in his train; for of all lovers of fat cheer, Wilhelm of Venloo, who has been styled Bonifacius in his baptism of office, is he that most worships the fruits of the earth. I would he and all his brotherhood were spiritually planted in the garden of Eden! They should be well watered with my tears!"

"The wish hath a saintly odor, but may not be accomplished without mortal aid—unless thou hast favor with the Prince Elector of Koeln, who might haply do thee that service, in the way of miracle."

"Thou triflest, knight, in a matter of great gravity," answered Emich roughly, for, notwithstanding his inherited and deadly dislike of the particular portion of the Church which interfered with his own power, the Count of Hartenburg had all the dependence on superior knowledge that is the unavoidable offspring of a limited education. "The Prince Elector hath served many noble families in the way thou namest, and he might do honor to houses less deserving of his grace than that of Leiningen. But here cometh the Abbot and his boon associates. God's curse await them for their pride and avarice!"

The clattering of hoofs had been gradually increasing, and was now heard even on the pavement of the outer court; for in order to do honor to his guests, the count had especially ordered there should be no delay or impediment from gate, portcullis, or bridge.

"Welcome, and reverence for thy churchly office, right holy Abbot!" cried Emich, from whose lips had just parted the malediction, advancing officiously to aid the prelate in dismounting—"Thou art welcome, brothers both; worthy companions of thy respected and honored chief."

The churchmen alighted, assisted by the menials of Hartenburg, with much show of honor on the part of the Count himself, and on that of his friends. When fairly on their feet, they courteously returned the greetings.

"Peace be with thee, son, and with this cavalier and servitor of the Church!" said Father Bonifacius, signing with the rapid manner in which a Catholic priest scatters his benedictions. "St. Benedict and the Virgin take ye all in their holy keeping! I trust, noble Emich, we have not given thee cause of vexation, by some little delay?"

"Thou never comest amiss, father, be it at morn, or be it at even; I esteem Hartenburg more than honored, when thy reverend head passeth beneath its portals."

"We had every desire to embrace thee, son, but certain offices of religion, that may not be neglected, kept us from the pleasure. But let us within; for I fear the evening air may do injury to those that are uncloaked."

At this considerate suggestion, Emich, with much show of respect to his guests, ushered them into the apartment he had himself so lately quitted. Here recommenced the show of those wily courtesies which, in that semi-barbarous and treacherous age, often led men to a heartless and sometimes to a blasphemous trifling with the most sacred obliga-

tions, to effect their purposes, and which, in our times, has degenerated to a deception, that is more measured perhaps, but which is scarcely less sophisticated and vicious. Much was said of mutual satisfaction at this opportunity of comingling spirits, and the blunt professions of the sturdy but politic baron were more than met by the pretending sanctity and official charity of the priest.

The Abbot of Limburg and his companions had come to the intended feast with vestments that partially concealed their characters ; but when the outer cloaks and the other garments were removed, they remained in the usual attire of their order, the prelate being distinguished from his inferiors by those symbols of clerical rank which it was usual for one of his authority to display when not engaged in the ministrations of the altar.

When the guests were at their ease, the conversation took a less personal direction, for though rude and unnurtured as his own war-horse, as regards most that is called cultivation in our bookish days, Emich of Hartenburg wanted for none of the courtesies that became his rank, more especially as civilities of this nature were held to be worthy of a feudal lord, and in that particular region.

"'Tis said, reverend Abbot," continued the host, pushing the discourse to a point that might favor his own secret views, "that our common master, the Prince Elector, is sorely urged by his enemies, and that there are even fears a stranger may usurp the rule in the noble Castle of Heidelberg. Hast thou heard aught of his late distresses, or of the necessities that bear upon his house?"

"Masses have been said for his benefit in all our chapels, and there are hourly prayers that he may prevail against his enemies. In virtue of a concession made to the abbey, by our common father at Rome, we offer liberal indulgences, too, to all that take up arms in this behalf."

"Thou art much united in love with Duke Friedrich, holy prelate!" muttered Emich.

"We owe him such respect as all should willingly pay to the strong temporal arm that shields them ; our serious fealty is due alone to heaven. But how comes it that so stout a baron, one so much esteemed in warlike exercises, and so well known in dangerous enterprises, rests in his doublet, at a time when his sovereign's throne is tottering? We had heard that thou wert summoning thy people, Herr Count, and thought it had been in the Elector's interest."

“Friedrich hath not of late given me cause to love him. If I have called my vassals about me, 'tis because the times teach every noble to be wary of his rights. I have consorted so much of late with my cousin of Viederbach, this self-denying Knight of Rhodes, that martial thoughts will obtrude even on the brain of one, peaceful and homebred as thy poor neighbor and penitent.”

The Abbot bowed and smiled, like one who gave full credit to the speaker's words, while a by-play arose between the wandering and houseless knight, the abbé, and the brothers of Limburg. In this manner did a few minutes wear away, when a flourish of trumpets announced that the expected banquet awaited its guests. Menials lighted the party to the hall in which the board was spread, and much ceremonious form was observed in assigning to each of the individuals the place suited to his rank and character. Count Emich, who in common was of a nature too blunt and severe to waste his efforts in superfluous breeding, now showed himself earnest to please, for he had at heart an object that he knew was in danger of being baffled by the more practised artifices of the monks. During the preliminary movements of the feast, which had all the gross and all the profuse hospitality which distinguished such entertainments, he neglected no customary observance. The robust and sensual Abbot was frequently plied with both cup and dish, while the inferior monks received the same agreeable attentions from Albrecht of Viederbach, and Monsieur Latouche, who, notwithstanding it suited his convenience to pass through life under the guise of a churchman, was none the worse at board or revel. As the viands and the generous liquors began to operate on the physical functions of the brothers, however, they insensibly dropped their masks, and each discovered more of those natural qualities which usually lay concealed from casual observation.

It was a rule of the Benedictines to practise hospitality. The convent door was never closed against the wayfarer, and he who applied for shelter and food was certain of obtaining both, administered more or less in a manner suited to the applicant's ordinary habits. The practice of a virtue so costly was a sufficient pretence for accumulating riches, and he who travels at this day in Europe will find ample proofs that the means of carrying into effect this law of the order were abundantly supplied. Abbeyes of

this particular class of monks are still of frequent occurrence in the forest cantons of Switzerland, Germany, and in most of the other Catholic states. But the gradual and healthful transfer of political power from clerical to laical hands, has long since shorn them of their temporal lustre. Many of these abbots were formerly princes of the empire, and several of the communities exercised sovereign sway over territories that have since taken to themselves the character of independent states.

While the spiritual charge and the mortifications believed to characterize a brotherhood of Benedictines were more especially left to a subordinate monk termed the prior, the abbot, or head of the establishment, was expected to preside not only over the temporalities, but at the board. This frequent communication with the vulgar interests of life, and the constant indulgence in its grosser gratifications, were but ill adapted to the encouragement of the monastic virtues. We have already remarked that the intimate connection between the interests of life and those of the church is destructive of apostolical character. This blending of God with Mammon, this device of converting the revealed ordinances of the Master of the Universe into a species of buttress to uphold temporal sway, though habit has so long rendered it familiar to the inhabitants of the other hemisphere, and even to a large portion of those who dwell in this, is, in our American eyes, only a little removed from blasphemy; but the triumphs of the press, and the changes made by the steady advances of public opinion, have long since done away with a multitude of still more equivocal usages, that were as familiar to those who existed three centuries ago, as our own customs to us at this hour. When prelates were seen in armor, leading their battalions to slaughter, it is not to be supposed that the other dignitaries of this privileged class would be more tender of appearances than was exacted by the opinions of the age.

Wilhelm of Venloo, known since his elevation as Bonifacius of Limburg, was not possessed of all that temporal authority, however, which tempted so many of his peers to sin. Still he was the head of a rich, powerful, and respected brotherhood, that had many allodial rights in lands beyond the abbey walls, and which was not without its claims to the fealty of sundry dependants. Of vigorous mind and body, this dignified churchman commanded

much influence by means of a species of character that often crosses us in life, a sturdy independence of thought and action that imposed on the credulous and timid, and which sometimes caused the bold and intelligent to hesitate. His reputation was far greater for learning than for piety, and his besetting sin was well known to be a disposition to encounter the shock between the powers of mind and matter, as both were liable to be affected by deep potations and gross feeding—a sort of degeneracy to which all are peculiarly liable who place an unnatural check on the ordinary and healthful propensities of nature—just as one sense is known to grow in acuteness as it is deprived of a fellow. The abbot loosened his robe, and threw his cowl still farther from his neck, while Emich pledged him in Rhenish, cup after cup; and by the time the meats were removed, and the powers of digestion, or we might better say of retention, would endure no more, his heavy cheeks became flushed, his bright, deeply-seated, and searching gray eyes flashed with a species of ferocious delight, and his lip frequently quivered, as the clay gave eloquent evidence of its enjoyment. Still his voice, though it had lost its rebuked and schooled tones, was firm, deep, and authoritative, and ever and anon he threw into his discourse some severe and pointed sarcasm, biting and scornful. His subordinates, too, gave similar proofs of the gradual lessening of their caution, though in degrees far less imposing, we had almost said less grand, than that which rendered the sensual excitement of their superior so remarkable. Albrecht and the abbé also betrayed, each in his own manner, the influence of the banquet, and all became garrulous, disputative, and noisy.

Not so with Emich of Hartenburg. He had eaten in a manner to do justice to his vast frame and bodily wants, and he drank fairly; but, until this moment, the nicest observer would have been puzzled to detect any decrease of his powers. The blue of his large leaden eyes became brighter, it is true, but their expression was yet in command, and their language courteous.

“Thou dost but little compliment to my poor fare, most holy Abbot,” cried the host, as he witnessed a lingering look of the prelate, whose eye followed the delicious fragments of a wild boar from the hall—“If the knaves have stinted thee in the choice of morsels, by St. Benedict! but the mountains of my chase can still furnish other animals of the kind—How now——”

"I pray thee, mercy, noble Emich! Thy forester hath done thee fair justice with his spear; more savory beast never smoked at table."

"It fell by the hand of young Berchthold, the Burgher of Duerckheim's orphan. 'Tis a bold youth in the forest, and I doubt not, his will one day be a ready hand in battle. Thou knowest him I mean, father, for he is often at thy abbey confessionals."

"He is better known to the prior than to one so busied with worldly cares as I. Is the youth at hand? I would fain render him thanks."

"Hear ye that, varlet! Bid my head forester appear. The reverend and noble Abbot of Limburg owes him grace."

"Didst thou say the youth was of Duerckheim?"

"Of that goodly town, reverend priest; and, though reduced by evil chances to be the ranger of my woods, a lad of mettle in the chase, and of no bad discourse in moments of ease."

"Thou claimest hard service, Cousin of Hartenburg, of these peaceful townsmen! Were they left freely to choose between the ancient duty of our convent, and this stirring life thou ledest the artisans, we should have more penitents within our walls."

The fealty of Duerckheim was a long mooted point between the corporation of Limburg and the house of Leiningen, and the allusion of the monk was not thrown away upon his host. Emich's brow clouded, and for a moment it threatened a storm; but, recovering his self-command, he answered in a tone of hilarity, though with sufficient coolness:—

"Thy words remind me of present affairs, reverend Bonifacius, and I thank thee that thou hast put a sudden check on festivities which were getting warm without an object." The Count arose, and filled to the brim a cup of horn, elaborately ornamented with gold, drawing the attention of all at table to himself by the action. "Nobles and reverend servants of God," he continued, "I drink to the health and happiness of the honored Wilhelm of Venloo, the holy Abbot of Limburg, and my loving neighbor. May his brotherhood never know a worse guide, and may the lives and contentment of all that now belong to it be as lasting as the abbey walls."

Emich concluded the potent cup at a single draught.

In order to do honor to the mitred monk, there had been placed by the side of Bonifacius a vessel of agate richly decorated with jewelry, an heir-loom of the house of Leiningen. While his host was speaking, the looks of the latter watched every expression of his countenance, through gray, overhanging, shaggy brows, that shaded the upper part of his face like a screen of shrubbery planted to shut out prying eyes from a close; and he paused when the health was given. Then, rising in his turn, he quaffed a compliment in return.

"I drink of this pure and wholesome liquor," he said, "to the noble Emich of Leiningen, to all of his ancient and illustrious house, to his and their present hopes, and to their final deliverance. May this goodly hold, and the happiness of its lord, endure as long as those walls of Limburg of which the Count has spoken, and which, were his loving wishes consulted, would doubtless stand for ever."

"By the life of the emperor, learned Bonifacius!" exclaimed Emich, striking his fist on the table with force, "you as much exceed one of my narrow wit in wishes, as in godliness and other excellences! But I pretend not to set limits to my desires in your behalf, and throw the fault of my imperfect speech on a youth that had more to do with the sword than with the breviary. And now let us to serious concerns. It may not be known to you, Cousin of Viederbach, or to this obliging churchman who honors Hartenburg with his presence, that there has been subject of amicable dispute between the brotherhood of Limburg and my unworthy house, touching the matter of certain wines, that are believed by the one party to be its dues, and by the other to be a mere pious grace accorded to the Church——"

"Nay, noble Emich," interrupted the Abbot, "we have never held the point to be disputable in any manner. The lands in question are held of us in socage; and, in lieu of bodily service, we have long since commuted for the produce of vines that might be named."

"I cry you mercy; if there be dues at all, they come of naught else than knight's service. None of my name or lineage ever paid less to mortal!"

"Let it be thus," Bonifacius answered more mildly. "The question is of the amount of liquor, and not of the tenure whence it comes."

"Thou sayest right, wise Abbot, and I cry mercy of

these listeners. State thou the matter, reverend Bonifacius, that our friends may know the humor on which we are madly bent."

The Count of Hartenburg succeeded in swallowing his rising ire, and made a gesture of courtesy towards the Abbot, as he concluded. Father Bonifacius rose again, and notwithstanding the physical ravages that excess was making within, it was still with the air of calmness and discipline that became his calling.

"As our upright and esteemed friend has just related," he said, "there is truly a point, of a light but unseemly nature to exist between so dear neighbors, open between him and us servants of God. The Counts of Leiningen have long considered it a pleasure to do favor to the Church, and in this just and commendable spirit, it is now some fifty years that, at the termination of each vintage, without regard to seasons or harvest, without stooping to change their habits at every change of weather, they have paid to our brotherhood——"

"Presented, priest!"

"Presented,—if such is thy will, noble Emich,—fifty casks of this gentle liquor that now warms our hearts towards each other, with brotherly and praiseworthy affection. Now, it has been settled between us, to avoid all future motive of controversy, and either the better to garnish our cellars, or to relieve the house of Hartenburg altogether of future imposition, that it shall be decided this night, whether the tribute henceforth shall consist of one hundred casks, or of nothing."

"By're Lady! A most important issue, and one likely to impoverish or to enrich!" exclaimed the Knight of Rhodes.

"As such we deem it," continued the monk, "and in that view, parchments of release, with all due appliances and seals, have been prepared by a clerkly scholar of Heidelberg. This indenture, duly executed," he added, drawing from his bosom the instruments in question, "yieldeth to Emich all the Abbey's rights to the vines in dispute, and this wanteth but his sign of arms and noble name, to double their present duty."

"Hold!" cried the Chevalier of the Cross, whose faculties began already to give way, though it was only in the commencement of the debauch: "Here is matter might puzzle the Grand Turk, who sits in judgment in the very

seat of Solomon! If thou renderest thy claims, and my cousin Emich yieldeth double tribute-money, both parties will be the worse, and neither possessed of the liquor!"

"In a merry mood, it hath been proposed that there shall be the trial of love and not of battle, between us, for the vines. The question is of liquor, and it is agreed,—St. Benedict befriend me, if there be sin in the folly! to try on whose constitution the disputed liquor is the most apt to work good or evil. Let the Count of Hartenburg give to his parchment the virtue that hath already been given to this of ours, and we shall leave both in some place of observation;—then, when he alone is able to rise and seize on both, let him give the victor's cry; but should he fail of that power, and there be a servant of the Church ready, and able to grasp the instruments, why let him go, and think no more of land that he hath right merrily lost."

"By St. John of Jerusalem, but this is a most unequal contest—three monks against one poor baron, in a trial of heads!"

"Nay, we think more of our honor, than to permit this wrong. The Count of Hartenburg hath full right to call in equal succor, and I have taken thee, gallant cavalier of Rhodes, and this learned Abbé, to be his chosen backers!"

"Let it be so!" cried the two in question,—“We ask no better service than to drain Count Emich's cellars to his honor and profit!"

But the lord of the hold had taken the matter, as indeed it was fully understood between the principals, to be a question on which depended a serious amount of revenue, for all futurity. The wager had arisen, in one of those wild contests for physical and gross supremacy, which characterize ages and countries of imperfect civilization; for next to deeds in arms and other manful exercises, like those of the chase and saddle, it was deemed honorable to be able to undergo the trials of the festive board with impunity. Nor should it occasion surprise to find churchmen engaged in these encounters; for, independently of our writing of an age when they appeared in the field, there is sufficient evidence that our own times are not entirely purified from so coarse abuses of the gown. But Bonifacius of Limburg, though a man of extensive learning and strong intellectual qualities, had a weakness on this particular point, for which we may be driven to seek an explanation in his peculiar animal con-

struction. He was of a powerful frame and sluggish temperament, both of which required strong excitement to be wrought up to the highest point of physical enjoyment; and neither the examples around him, nor his own particular opinions, taught him to avoid a species of indulgence that he found so agreeable to his constitution. With these serious views of a contest, to which neither party would probably have consented, had not each great confidence in himself as a well-tried champion, both Emich and the Abbot required that the instruments should be openly read. The discharge of this duty was assigned to Monsieur Latouche, who forthwith proceeded to wade through a torrent of unintelligible terms, that were generated in the obscurity of feudal times for the benefit of the strong, and which are continued to our own period through pride of professional knowledge, a little quickened by a view to professional gain. On the subject of the true consideration of the respective releases, the instruments themselves were silent, though nothing material was wanting to give them validity, especially when supported by a good sword; or the power of the Church, to which the parties looked respectively in the event of flaws.

Count Emich listened warily as his guest the Abbé read clause after clause of the deed. Occasionally his eye wandered to the firm countenance of the Abbot, betraying habitual distrust of his hereditary and powerful enemy, but it was quickly riveted again on the heated features of the reader.

"This is well," he said, when both papers had been examined: "These vines are to remain forever with me and mine, without claim from any grasping churchman, so long as grass shall grow or water run, or henceforth they pay double tribute, a tax that will leave little for the cellar of their rightful lord."

"Such are our terms, noble Emich. But to confirm the latter condition, thy seal and name are wanting to the instrument."

"Were the latter to be written by a good sword, none could do the office better than this poor arm, reverend Abbot; but thou knowest well, that my youth was too much given to warlike and other manly exercises befitting my rank, to allow much time for acquiring clerkly skill. By the holy Virgins of Koeln! It were, in sooth, a shame to confess, that one of my class in these stirring times had leisure for

such lady games ! Bring hither an eagle's feather—hand of mine never yet touched aught from meaner wing—that I may do justice to the monks."

The necessary implements being produced, the Count of Hartenburg proceeded to execute the instrument on his part. The wax was speedily attached and duly impressed with the bearings of Leiningen, for the noble wore a signet-ring of massive size, ready at all times to give this token of his will. But when it became necessary to subscribe the name, a signal was made to a domestic, who disappeared in quest of the Count's man of charge. This individual manifested some reluctance to perform the customary office, but, as there was just then a clamorous dialogue among the party at table, he seized the moment to examine into the nature of the document, and the consideration that was to decide the ownership of the vineyard. Grinning in satisfaction, at a species of payment in which he held it to be impossible Lord Emich could fail to acquit himself honorably, the dependant took the hand of his master, and, accustomed to the duty, he so guided it as to leave a very legible and creditable signature. When this had been done, and the papers were properly witnessed, the Count of Hartenburg glanced suspiciously from the deed in his hand to the indomitable face of the Abbot, as if he still half repented of the act. "Look you, Bonifacius," he said, shaking a finger,—“Should there be flaw, or doubt of any intention in this our covenant, sword of mine shall cut it !”

“First earn the right, Count of Leiningen. The deeds are of equal virtue, and he who would lay claim to their benefits must win the wager. We are but poor brothers of St. Benedict, and little worthy to be named with warlike barons and devoted followers of St. John, but we have an humble trust in our patron.”

“By St. Benedict, it shall pass for a miracle, if thou prevailest !” shouted Emich, yielding the deed in a burst of delight. “Away with these cups of agate and horn, and bring forth vessels of glass, that all may see we deal fairly by each other, in this right manly encounter. Look to your wits, monks.—By the word of a cavalier, your Latin will do little service in this dispute.”

“Our trust is in our patron,” answered Father Siegfried, who had already done so much honor to the banquet, as to give reason to believe, that, in his case, the fraternity

leaned upon a fragile staff. "He never yet deserted his children, when fairly enlisted in a good cause."

"You are cunning in reasons, fathers," put in the knight—"and I doubt not that sufficient excuses would be forthcoming, were you pushed to justify service to the devil."

"We suffer for the church," was the Abbot's answer, after taking a bumper in obedience to a signal from his host. "We hold it to be commendable to struggle with the flesh, that our altars may flourish."

As soon as executed, the two deeds had been placed on a high and curiously wrought vessel of silver, that contained cordials, and which occupied the centre of the board, and more fitting cups having been brought, the combatants were compelled to swallow draught after draught, at signals from Emich, who, like a true knight, saw that each man showed loyalty. But, as the conflict was between men of great experience in this species of contention, and as it endured hours, we deem it unworthy of the theme to limit its description to a single chapter. Before closing the page, however, we shall digress for a moment, in order to express our opinions concerning the great human properties involved in this sublime strife.

It has been the singular fortune of America to be the source of numberless ingenious theories, that, taking their rise in the other hemisphere, have been let loose upon the world to answer ends that we shall not stop to investigate. The dignified and beneficed prelate maintains there is no worship of God within our land, probably because there are no dignified and beneficed prelates; a sufficiently logical conclusion for all who believe in the efficacy of that self-denying class of Christians; while the neophyte, in some lately invented religion, denounces us all in a body, as so many miserable bigots devoted to Christ! In this manner is a pains-taking and plain-dealing nation of near fourteen millions of souls kept, as it were, in abeyance in the opinions of the rest of mankind, one deeming them as much beyond, as another fancies them to be short of, truth. In the fearful catalogue of our deadly sins, is included a propensity to indulge in excesses similar to that it is now our office to record. As we are confessedly democrats, dram-drinking in particular has been pronounced to be a "democratic vice."

It has been our fortune to have lived in familiarity with a greater variety of men, either considered in reference to

their characters or their conditions, than ordinarily falls to the lot of any one person. We have visited many lands, not in the capacity of a courier, but staidly and soberly, as becomes a grave occupation, setting up our household gods, and abiding long enough to see with our eyes and to hear with our ears; and we feel emboldened to presume on these facts, in order to express a different opinion, amid the flood of assertions that has been made by those who certainly have no better claim to be heard. And, firstly, we shall here say that, as in the course of justice, an intelligent, upright, single-minded, and discriminating witness is, perhaps, the rarest of all desirable instruments in effecting its sacred ends, so do we acknowledge a traveller, entitled to full credit, to be the mortal of all others the least likely to be found.

The art of travelling, we apprehend, is far more practised than understood. To us it has proved a laborious, harassing, puzzling, and oftentimes a painful pursuit. To divest one's self of impressions made in youth; to investigate facts without referring their merits to a standard bottomed on a foundation no better than habit; to analyze, and justly to compare the influence of institutions, climate, natural causes, and practice; to separate what is merely exception from that which forms the rule; or even to obtain and carry away accurate notions of physical things, and, most of all, to possess the gift of imparting these results comprehensively and with graphical truth, requires a combination of time, occasion, previous knowledge, and natural ability, that rarely falls to the lot of a single individual. One assumes the task prepared by acquaintance with established opinions, which are commonly no more than prejudices, the result of either policy, or of the very difficulties just enumerated; and he goes on his way, not only ready but anxious to receive the proofs of what he expects, limiting his pleasure to the sort of delight, that dependent minds feel in following the course pointed out by those that are superior. As the admitted peculiarities of every people are sufficiently apparent, he converts self-evident facts into collateral testimony, and faithfully believes and imagines all that is concealed on the strength of that which is obvious. For such a traveller time wears away men and things in vain; he accords his belief to the last standard opinion of his sect, with a devotion to convention that might purchase salvation in a better cause.

To him Vesuvius is just as high, produces the same effect in the view, and has exactly the same outline as before the crater fell; and he watches the workmen disinterring a house at its base, and goes away rejoicing at having witnessed the resurrection of a Roman dwelling after eighteen hundred years of interment, simply because it is the vulgar account that Pompeii was lost for that period. If he should happen to be a scholar, what is his delight in following a cicerone (a title assumed by some wily *servitore di Piazza*) to the little garden that overlooks the Roman Forum, and in fancying that he stands upon the Tarpeian Rock! His faith in moral qualities, his graduation of national virtue, and his views of manners, are equally the captives of the last popular rumor. A Frenchman may roll incontinently in the *gras de Paris*, filled with an alcohol inflammable as gunpowder, and in his eyes it shall pass for pure animal light-heartedness, since it is out of all rule for a Frenchman to be intoxicated, while the veriest tyro knows that the nation dances to a man! The gallant general, the worshipful alderman, the right honorable adviser of the king, may stammer around a subject for half an hour, in St. Stephen's, in a manner to confound all conclusion, and generalize so completely as to baffle particularity, and your hearer shall go away convinced of the excellence of the great school of modern eloquence, because the orator has been brought up at the "feet of Gamaliel." When one thoroughly imbued with this pliant faculty, gets into a foreign land, with what a diminished reverence for his own does he journey! As few men are endowed with sufficient penetration to pierce the mists of received opinion, fewer still are they that are so strong in right as to be able to stem its tide. He who precedes his age is much less likely to be heard, than he who lingers in its rear: and when the unwieldy body of the mass reaches the eminence on which he has long stood the object of free comment, it may be assumed as certain, that they who were his bitterest deriders when his doctrine was new, will be foremost in claiming the honors of the advance. In short, to instruct the world, it is necessary to watch the current, and to act on the public mind like the unseen rudder, by slight and imperceptible variations, avoiding, as a seaman would express it, any very rank sheer, lest the vessel should refuse to mind her helm and go down with the stream.

We have been led into these reflections, by frequent opportunities of witnessing the facility with which opinions are adopted concerning ourselves, because they have come from the pens of those who have long contributed to amuse and instruct us, but which are perfectly valueless, both from the unavoidable ignorance of those who utter them, and from the hostile motives that gave them birth. To that class which would wish to put in a claim to *bon ton*, by undervaluing their countrymen, we have nothing to say, since they are much beyond improvement, and are quite unable to understand all the high and glorious consequences dependent on the great principles of which this republic is the guardian. Their fate was long since settled by a permanent and wise provision of human feeling ; but, presuming on the opportunities mentioned, and long habits of earnest observation in the two hemispheres, we shall conclude this digression by merely adding, that it is the misfortune of man to abuse the gifts of God, let him live in what country or under what institutions he may. Excess of the description in question is the failing of every people, nearly in proportion to their means ; nor are there any certain preventives against a vice so destructive, but absolute want, or a high cultivation of the reasoning faculties.

He who has accurately ascertained how far the people of this republic are behind or before the inhabitants of other lands, in mental improvement and moral qualities, will not be far from the truth in assigning to them a correspondent place in the scale of sobriety. It is true that many foreigners will be ready enough to deny this position, but we have had abundant opportunities of observing, that all those who visit our shores do not come sufficiently prepared, by observation at home, to make just comparisons, and what we have here said has not been ventured without years of close and honest investigation. We shall gladly hail the day when it can be said, that not an American exists, so lost to himself as to trifle with the noblest gift of the Creator ; but we cannot see the expediency of attaining an end, desirable even as this, by the concession of premises that are false.

CHAPTER VII.

“What a thrice-double ass

Was I, to take this drunkard for a god !”—*Caliban.*

PHYSICAL qualities are always prized in proportion to the value that is attached to those that are purely intellectual. So long as power and honor depend on the possession of brute force, strength and agility are endowments of the last importance, on the same principle that they render the tumbler of more account in his troop ; and he who has ever had occasion to mingle much with the brave, and subject to a qualification that will readily be understood, we might add, the noble savages of this continent, will have remarked that, while the orators are in general a class who have cultivated their art for want of qualifications to excel in that which is deemed still more honorable, the first requisite in the warrior is stature and muscle. There exists a curious document to prove how much even their successors, a people in no degree deficient in acuteness, have been subject to a similar influence. We allude to a register that was made of the thews and sinews among the chiefs of the army of Washington, during the moment of inaction that preceded the recognition of Independence. By this report it would seem, that the animal entered somewhat into the ideas of our fathers, when they made their original selection of leaders, a circumstance that we attribute to the veneration that man is secretly disposed to show to physical perfection, until a better training and experience have taught him there is still a superior power. Our first impressions are almost always received through the senses, and the connexion between martial prowess and animal force seems so natural, that we ought not to be surprised that a people so peaceful and unpractised, in their simplicity, betrayed a little of this deference to appearances. Happily, if they sometimes put matter into stations which would have been better filled by mind, the honesty and zeal that were so general in the patriotic ranks carried the country through in triumph.

It was a consequence of the high favor enjoyed by all manly or physical qualities in the sixteenth century, that men were even prized for their excesses. Thus he who

could longest resist the influence of liquor was deemed, in a more limited sense, as much a hero as he who swung the heaviest mace, or pointed the surest cannon in battle. The debauch in which the Abbot of Limburg and his neighbor Emich of Leiningen, were now engaged, was one of no unusual nature; for, in a country in which prelates appeared in so many other doubtful characters, it should not excite surprise that some of the class were willing to engage in a strife that had little danger, while it was so highly in favor with the noble and the great.

The reader will have seen that great progress had been made towards the issue of the celebrated encounter it is our duty to relate, even before its precise object had been formally introduced among the contending parties. But while the monks came to the struggle apprized of its motive, and prepared at all points to maintain the reputation of their ancient and hospitable brotherhood, the Count of Leiningen, with a sullen reliance on his own powers, that was somewhat increased by his contempt for priestcraft, had neglected to bestow the same care on his auxiliaries. It is scarcely necessary to add that both the Abbé and the Knight of Rhodes had become heated to garrulousness, before they perfectly understood the nature of the service that was expected at their hands, or, we ought rather to say, of their heads. With this explanation we shall resume the narrative, taking up its thread some two hours later than the moment when it was last dropped.

At this particular juncture of the strife, Fathers Siegfried and Cuno had become thoroughly warmed with their endeavors, and habitual and profound respect for the Abbot was gradually giving way before the quickening currents of their blood. The eyes of the former glistened with a species of forensic ferocity, for he was ardently engaged on a controversial point with Albrecht of Viederbach, all of whose faculties appeared to be rapidly exhaling with his potations. The other Benedictine and the Abbé from time to time mingled in the dispute, in the character of seconds, while the two most interested in the issue sat, warily collecting their powers, and sternly regarding each other, like men who knew they were not engaged in idle sport.

"This is well, with thy tales of L'Isle Adam, and the Ottoman power," continued Father Siegfried, pursuing the discourse from a point, beyond which we consider it un

necessary to record all that passed—"This will do to repeat to the dames of our German courts, for the journey between these Rhenish plains and yonder island of Rhodes is far, and few are inclined to make it, in order to convict thy chiefs of neglect, or their sworn followers of forgetfulness of their vows."

"By the quality of my order! reverend Benedictine, thou pushest words to unseemliness! Is it not enough, that the chosen and the gentlest of Europe should devote soul and body to services that would better become thy lazy order—that all that is noble and brave should abandon the green fields and pleasant rivers of their native lands, to endure hot suns and sultry winds from Africa, in order to keep the unbeliever in his limits, but they must be taunted with gibes like these? Go, count the graves and number the living, if thou wouldst learn the manner in which our illustrious master held out against Solyman, or wouldst know the services of his knights!"

"It would sound ill in thy ears, were I to bid thee enter purgatory, to inquire into the fruits of our masses and prayers, and yet one and the other are equally easy to perform. Thou knowest well, that Rhodes is no longer a Christian island, and that none bearing the cross dare be seen on its shores. Go to, Count Albrecht, thy order is fallen into disuse, and it is better where it is, hid beneath the snowy mountains of the country of Nice, than it might be in the front ranks of Christendom. There is not a crone in Germany that does not bewail the backsliding of an order so esteemed of old, or a maiden that does not speak lightly of its deeds!"

"Heavenly patience! hearest thou this, Monsieur Latouche? and from the mouth of a chanting Benedictine, who passeth his days between safe walls of stone, here in the heart of the Palatinate, and his nights on a warm pallet, beyond sound even of the rushing winds, unless, in sooth, he be not sent on offices of midnight charity among the believing wives of the faithful!"

"Boy! dost presume to scandalize the Church, and dare its anger?" demanded Bonifacius, in a voice of thunder.

"Reverend Abbot," answered Albrecht, crossing himself, for habit and policy equally held him subject to the predominant authority of the age, "the little I say is more directed to the man than to his cloth."

"Let him give utterance to all he fancies," interrupted

the wily Siegfried. "Is not a knight of Rhodes immaculate, and shall we refuse him right of speech?"

"It is held at the court of the chivalrous Valois," observed the Abbé, who perceived it was necessary to interfere, in order to preserve the peace, "that the defence of Rhodes was of exceeding valor, and few survived it, who did not meet with high honors from Christian hands. We have seen numberless of the brave knights among us, in the most esteemed houses of Paris, and at the merry castle of Fontainebleau, and believe me, none were more sought or better honored. The scars of even Marignano and of Pavia are less prized than those given by the hands of the infidel."

"Thou dost well, my learned and self-denying brother," answered Siegfried, with a sneer, "to remind us of the fight of Pavia, and of thy great master's present abode! Are these tidings of late from the Castiles, or is it not permitted to thy prince to dispatch couriers to his own capital?"

"Nay, reverend monk, thou pressest with unkind allusions, and forgettest that, like thee, we are both servitors of the Church."

"We count thee not—one nor the other. Martyred St. Peter! what would become of thy keys were they intrusted to the keeping of such hands!—Go, doff thy vanities—lay aside that attire of velvet, if though wouldst be known as of the flock."

"Master Latouche," exclaimed Emich, who was boiling with indignation, but who preserved his self-command in order to circulate the cups, and to see that each man did true service in the prescribed contest, "tell him of his brother of Wittenberg, and of these late doings in the hive. Stick that thorn into his side, and thou shalt see him shrink like a jaded and galled steed under a pointed spur! Who art thou, and why dost thou disturb my pleasures?"

This sudden interruption of himself was addressed by the baron to a youth, in neat but modest attire, who had just entered the banqueting-room, and who, passing by the menial that filled the glasses at the beck of his master's hand, now stood, with a firm but respectful mien, at the elbow of the speaker.

"'Tis Berchthold, my lord's forester. They bid me come to do your pleasure, noble Count."

"Thou art seasonably arrived to keep the peace between a sworn knight of Rhodes and a garrulous monk of Limburg. This reverend Abbot would do thee favor, boy."

Berchthold bowed respectfully, and turned towards the prelate.

"Thou art the orphan of our ancient liegeman, he who bore thy name, and was well esteemed among the townsmen of Duerckheim?"

"I am the son of him your reverence means, but that he was liegeman of any of Limburg, I deny."

"Bravely answered, boy!" shouted Emich, striking his fist on the table so hard as to threaten destruction to all it held: "Aye, and as becomes thy master's follower! Hast enough, Father Bonifacius, or wilt dip deeper into the youth's catechism?"

"The young man has been tutored to respect his present ease," returned the Abbot, affecting indifference equally to the exultation of the Count and to the disrespect of his forester. "When he next comes to our confessionals, there will be occasion to give him other schooling."

"God's truth! that hour may never happen. We are half disposed to live on in our sins, and to take soldier's fortune, in these stirring times, which is ever the chance of sudden death, without the Church's passport. We are fast getting of this mind—are we not, brave Berchthold?"

The youth bowed respectfully, but without answering, for he saw by the inflamed countenances and swimming eyes of all at the table, that the moment was one in which explanations would be useless. Had it been possible to doubt the cause of the scene he witnessed, the manner in which glass after glass was swallowed, at the will of the cup-bearer, would have explained its nature. But, far advanced as Father Bonifacius had now become in inebriety, in common with the other guests, he retained enough of his faculties, to see that the words of Emich contained an allusion of a dangerously heretical character.

"Thou art resolved to despise our counsel and our warnings!" he exclaimed, glancing fiercely at one and the other. "'Twere better to say at once, that thy wish is to see the walls of Limburg Abbey lying on the side of Limburg hill."

"Nay, reverend and honored priest, thou pushest a few hasty words beyond their meaning. What is it to a Count

of the noble house of Leiningen, that a few monks find shelter for their heads, and ease for their souls, beneath a consecrated roof within cannon-shot of his own towers. If thy walls do not tumble until hand of mine helps to unsettle them, they may stand till the fallen Angel that set them up, shall aid in their overthrow. Truly, Father Bonifacius, for a godly community, this tale of thy sanctuary's origin makes it of none of the best parentage!"

"Hear ye that!" sputtered Albrecht of Viederbach, who, though his tongue had continued to sound a sort of irregular accompaniment to his cousin's speeches, was no longer able to articulate clearly—"Hear ye that! imp of St. Benedict! The devil set ye up, and the devil will be your downfall. L'Isle Adam is a saint to thy holiest; and his—good—sword——"

At this word, the Knight of Rhodes succumbed, losing his balance in an animated effort to gesticulate, and fairly falling under the table. A sarcastic smile crossed the Abbot's face, at this overthrow of one of his adversaries, while Emich scowled in disdain at the ignoble exhibition made by his kinsman; who, finding it impossible to rise, resigned himself to sleep on the spot where he had fallen.

"Swallow thy Rhenish, monk, and count not on the slight advantage thou hast got in the overthrow of that prating fool," said the host, whose tones grew less and less amicable, as the plot thickened—"But to a more fitting subject; Berchthold is worthy of his lord, and is a youth that thinks of things as things appear. We may quit thy confessionals for divers reasons, as thou knowest. Here is the Monk of Erfurth! Ha! what think you of his new teaching, and of the manner in which he advises the faithful to come to the altar? You have had him at Rome, and at Worms, and among ye in many councils, yet the honest man stands fast in all reasonable opinions. Thou hast heard of Luther, is it not so, young Berchthold?"

"'Tis certain, my Lord Count, that few in the Jaergerthal escape the tidings of his name."

"Then are they in danger of a most damnable heresy!" interrupted Bonifacius, in a voice of thunder. "Why tell me of this driveller of Erfurth, Lord Emich, if thou art not in secret praying that his rebellious wishes may prosper at the Church's cost! But we mark thee, irreverent Count, and hard and griping penance may yet purge thee of these prurient fancies—" Here the Abbot, inflamed as

he was with wine and resentment, paused ; for the silent monk, Father Cuno, fell from his seat like a soldier shot in battle ; the simple inferior having entered into the trial of heads, more with a relish for the liquor than with any thought of victory, and having, in consequence, done so much honor to the potations, as to become an easy sacrifice to the common enemy. The Abbot looked at his prostrate follower with grim indifference, showing by his hard, scowling, and angry eye, that he deemed the loss of little moment to the main result. "What matters the impotency of a fool !" he muttered, turning away to his principal and only dangerous opponent, with a full return of all his angry feelings :—"That the devils are suffered to gain a momentary and specious triumph, we are well aware, Baron of Hartenburg——"

"By my father's bones, proud priest, but thou strangely forgettest thyself ! Am I not a prince of Leiningen, that one of the cowl should please to call me less ?"

"I should have said the Summer Landgrave !" answered Bonifacius sneeringly, for long-smothered hatred was beginning to break through the feeble barriers that their reeling faculties still preserved. "I crave pardon of your highness ; but a short reign leaves brief recollections. Even thy subjects, illustrious Emich, may be forgiven, that they know not their sovereign's title. The coronet that is worn from June to September scarce gets the fit of the head !"

"It was worn longer, Abbot, than ever head of thine will wear a saintly crown. But I forget my ancient house, and the forbearance due to a guest, in honest anger at an artful and malignant monk !"

Bonifacius bowed with seeming composure, and while each appeared to recover his moderation, in a misty recollection of the true affair in hand, the dialogue between the Abbé and Father Siegfried, which had been drowned by the stentorian lungs of the principal disputants, broke out in the momentary pause.

"Thou sayest true, reverend father," said the former, "but were our fair and sprightly dames of France to perform these pilgrimages to distant shrines, of which thou speakest, rude treatment in the wayfaring, evil company, and, haply, designing confessors, might tarnish the present lustre of their graces, and leave them less ornaments to our brilliant and gallant court than they at present prove.

No, I espouse no such dangerous opinions, but endeavor, by gentle persuasion and courtly arguments, to lead their precious souls nearer to the heaven they so well merit, and which it were scarce impious to say they will so rarely become."

"This may be well for the towering fancies of thy French imaginations, but our slower German minds must be dealt with differently. By the mass! I would give little for the success of the confessor, that should deal only in persuasive and gentle discourse! Here, we throw our manifold hints of damnation, in plainer speech."

"I condemn no usage on speculation, Benedictine; but truly this directness of condemnation would be thought indecorous in our more refined presences. As yet, thou wilt acknowledge, we are less tainted with heresies than thy northern courts."

Here the deep voice of Emich, who had recovered a little self-command, again drowned the by-play of the subordinates.

"We are not children, most reverend Bonifacius," he resumed, "to irritate ourselves with names. That I have been denied the honors and rights of my birth and line, for one come of no direct descent, is admitted; but let it be forgotten. Thou art welcome to my board, and there is no dignitary of the church, or of thy brotherhood, that I esteem more than thee and thine, within a hard ride of these towers. Let us be friends, holy Abbot, and drink to our loving graces."

"Count Emich, I pledge thee, and pray for thee, as thou meritest. If there have been misunderstandings between our convent and thy house, they have come of the misguiding of the devil. We are a peaceful community, and one given more to prayer and a just hospitality than to any grasping desire to enrich our coffers."

"On these points we will not dwell, father, for it is not easy for baron and abbot, layman and priest, to see at all times with the same eyes. I would that this question of authority in Duerckheim were fairly disposed of, that there might always be good neighborhood in the valley. Our hills shut in no wide plain, like yon of the river, that we must needs turn the little level land we have into a battleground. By the mass, most holy Abbot, but thou wouldst do well to dismiss the Elector's troops, and trust this matter between us to gentle and friendly argument."

“If it were the last prayer I uttered before passing into the fruition of a self-denying and holy life, princely Emich, thy wish should not want support! Have we not often professed a willingness to refer the question to the Holy Father, or any other high church authority, that can fittingly take cognizance of so knotty a point. Less than this arbitration would scarce become our apostolic mission.”

“God’s truth! mein Herr Wilhelm, but ye are too grasping for those who mortify the flesh! Is it meet, I ask ye, that a goodly number of valiant and pains-taking burghers should be led by shaven crowns in the day of strife, in fair and foul, evil and good, like so many worthless women, who, having lived in the idleness and vanities of gossip and backbiting, are fain to hope that their sex’s sins may be hid beneath a monk’s frock? Give me up, therefore, this question of Duerckheim, and certain other rights that might be fairly written out, and the saints in Paradise shall not live in more harmony than we of the Jaegerthal.”

“Truly, Lord Emich, the means of fitting us for the heavenly state thou namest have not been forgotten, since thou hast made a purgatory of the valley these many years
_____”

“By the mass, priest, thou again pushest thy remarks beyond discreet speech! In what manner have I done aught to bring this scandal on the neighborhood, beyond a mere forethought to mine own interest. Hast thou not opened thy abbey-gates to receive armed and irreligious men?—are not thy ears hourly wounded by rude oaths, and thy eyes affronted by sights that should be thought unseemly in a sanctuary?—Nay, that thou mayest not suppose I am ignorant of thy hidden intentions, do not the armed bands of Duke Friedrich lie at watch, this very moment, within thy cloisters?”

“We have a just caution of our rights and of the church’s honor,” answered Bonifacius, who scarce endeavored to conceal the contemptuous smile the question excited.

“Believe me, Abbot of Limburg, so far from being the enemy of our holy religion, I am its sworn friend; else should I long since have joined the proselytes of this brother Luther, and have done thee harm openly.”

“’Twere better than to pray at our altars by day, and to plot their fall at night.”

"I swear by the life of the Emperor that thou urgest me too far, haughty priest!"

The clamor created by the Abbe and Father Siegfried here caused the two principal speakers to direct their attention, for the moment, to the secondary combatants. From a courtly dispute, the argument had got to be so confused and warm, between the latter, that each raised his voice in a vain endeavor to drown that of his adversary. It was but an instant before the whirling senses of M. Latouche, who had only maintained his present place in the debauch by fraud, gave way to so rude an assault, and he staggered to a settee, where, gesticulating wildly, he soon sunk at his length, unable to lift his head. Father Siegfried witnessed the retreat of his mercurial foe with a grin of exultation; then he raised a ferocious shout, which, coming from lungs that had so lately chanted to the honor of God, caused the young Berchthold to shudder with horror. But the glazed eyes of the monk, and his failing countenance, betrayed an inability to endure more. After staring wildly about him, with the unmeaning idiocy of a drunkard, he settled himself in his chair, and closed his eyes in the heavy sleep that nature unwillingly furnishes to those who abuse her gifts.

The Abbot and the Count witnessed the manner in which their respective seconds were thus put *hors de combat*, in sullen silence. Their growing warmth, and the feelings excited by the mention of their several grievances, had insensibly drawn their attention from the progress of the contest, but each now regained a certain glimpse of its nature and of its results; the recollection served to recall the temper of both, for they were too well practised in these scenes not to understand the value of presence of mind in maintaining the command of their faculties.

"Our brother Siegfried hath yielded to the frailties of nature, noble Emich," resumed Boniface, smiling as placidly on his remaining companion, as flushed features and a heated eye would permit. "The flesh of priest can endure no more than that of layman, else would he have seen thy flasks drained of the last drop, for better intention never filled grateful heart, in doing honor to the gifts of Providence."

"Aye, thou passest thy debauches to the account of this subtilty, while we of the sword, Master Abbot, sin to-night, and ask forgiveness to-morrow, without other pretence

than our pleasures. But the hood of a monk is a mask, and he who wears it thinks he hath a right to the benefit of the disguise. I would I knew, to a bodice, the number of burghers' wives thou hast shrived since Corpus Domini!"

"Jest not with the secrets of the confessional, Count Emich; the subject is too sacred for profane tongues. There has been bitter penance for greater than thou!"

"Nay, mistake me not, holy Abbot," returned the baron, hurriedly crossing himself; "but your bold talkers say there is discontent in Duerckheim on this point, and I deem it friendly to communicate the accusations of the enemy. This is a moment in which our German monks are in danger; for, in sooth, thy brother of Erfurth is no driveller in his cry against Rome."

The eye of Father Boniface flashed fire, for none are so quick to meet, or so violent to resent attacks, on what they consider their rights, as those who have long been permitted to enjoy monopolies, however frail or unjust may be the tenure of their possession.

"In thy heart, rude Emich, thou clingest to the heresy!" he said; "Beware, in what manner thou castest the weight of thy example and name into the scale against the commands of God and the authority of the Church! As for this Luther, a backsliding wretch, that unquiet ambition and love for a professed but misguided nun, having urged to rebellion, the devils are rejoicing in his iniquity, and imps of darkness stand ready to riot in his final and irretrievable fall."

"By the mass! Father, to a plain soldier it seemeth better to wive the sister honestly, than to give all this scandal in Duerckheim, and otherwise to do violence to the peace of families on the fair plains of the Palatinate. If Brother Luther hath done no more than thou sayest here, he hath fairly cheated Satan, which is what thy community did of old, when it got the evil spirit to aid in raising thy chapel, and then, with no great regard to a debtor's obligations, sent him away penniless."

"Were the truth known, Emich, I fear it would be found that thou hast faith in this silly legend!"

"If thou hast not outwitted the devil, priest, it hath been that his prudence hath kept him from bargaining with those he knows to be his betters in cunning. By the rood! 'twas a bold spirit that would grapple, wit to wit, with the monks of Limburg!"

Disdain kept the Abbot from answering, for he was too superior to vulgar tradition to feel even resentment at an imputation of this kind. His host perceived that he was losing ground, and he began to see, by the manner in which his senses were slowly receding, that he was in imminent danger of forfeiting the important stake that now depended wholly on his powers of endurance. The Abbot had a well-earned reputation of having the strongest head of all the churchmen of the Palatinate, and Count Emich, who was nowise wanting in physical excellence of this sort, began to feel that species of failing which is commonly the forerunner, as it is often the cause, of defeat. He swallowed bumper after bumper, with a reckless desire to overwhelm his antagonist, without thought of the inroads that he was producing on his own faculties. Bonifacius, who saw and felt his superiority, willingly indulged his antagonist in this feverish desire to drive the struggle to a premature issue, and several glasses were taken in a sort of sullen defiance, without a syllable issuing from the lips of either. In this strait, the Count turned his swimming eyes towards the attendants, in a vague hope that they who served him so faithfully on ordinary occasions, might aid him in the present desperate emergency.

Young Berchthold Hintermayer stood near his lord, in respectful attendance on his pleasure, for habit prevented him from withdrawing without an order. Enough had fallen from the parties in this singular contest to let him into the secret of its object. He appeared to understand the appeal, and advancing to do the office of cup-bearer, a duty that in truth required some such interference, for he who should have discharged it had been too diligently imitating those at the board to be able any longer to acquit himself with propriety of his functions.

"If my Lord Abbot would but relieve the passing time," said Berchthold, as he poured out the wine, "by descanting more at large on this heresy, he might be the instrument of saving a doubting soul; I freely confess, that for one, I find much reason to distrust the faith of my fathers."

This was attacking the Abbot on his weakest, not to say his only vulnerable, point.

"Thou shalt smart for this, bold boy!" he cried, striking the table with a clenched fist. "Thou harborest heresies,

unfledged and paltry reasoner on apostolic missions! 'Tis well—'tis well—the impudent avowal is noted!"

Emich made a sign of gratitude, for in his rage the priest took a heavy draught, unconscious of what he was about.

"Nay, my lord, the most reverend Abbot will pardon imprudent speech in one little gifted in knowledge of this sort. Were it to strike a wild boar, or to stop a roebuck, or haply to do harm to my master's enemies, this hand might prove of some account; but is it matter of fair surprise that we of simple wit should be confounded, when the most learned of Germany are at a loss what to believe? I have heard it said, that Master Luther made noble answers in all the councils, and wise bodies, in which he hath of late appeared."

"He spoke with the tongue of Lucifer!" roared the Abbot, fairly frothing with the violence of ungovernable rage. "Whence cometh this new and late-discovered religion? Of what stock and root is it? Why hath it been so long hid, and where is its early history? Doth it mount to Peter and Paul, or is it the invention of modern arrogance and rank conceit?"

"Nay, father, the same might be asked of Rome itself, before Rome knew an apostle. The tree is not less a tree after it hath been trimmed of its decayed branches, though it may be more comely."

Father Bonifacius was both acute and learned, and, under ordinary circumstances, even the monk of Wittenberg might have found him a stubborn and subtle casuist; but in his actual condition, the most sophistical remark, if it had but the aspect of reason, was likely to inflame him. Thus assailed, therefore, he exhibited an awful picture of the ferocity of human passions when brutalized by indulgence. His eyes seemed starting from his head, his lips quivered, and his tongue refused its functions. He was now in the predicament in which the Count had so lately stood; and, though he foresaw the consequences, with the desperation of an inebriated man, he sought the renewal of his forces in the very agent which had undermined them. Count Emich himself was past intelligible utterance, but eloquence not being his strongest arm, he still maintained sufficient command of his physical powers to continue the conflict. He flourished his hand in defiance, and muttered words that seemed to breathe hatred and scorn. In this manner did a noble of an illustrious and princely house,

and a mitred prelate of the church, stand at bay, with little other consciousness of the existence of the nobler faculties of their being than that connected with the common mercenary object which had induced this trial of endurance.

"The Church's malediction on ye all!" Boniface at length succeeded in uttering :—then falling back in his elbowed and well-cushioned chair, he yielded his faculties to the sinister influence of the liquor he had swallowed.

When Emich of Leiningen witnessed the overthrow of his last antagonist, a gleam of intelligence and triumph shot from beneath his shaggy brows. By a desperate effort he raised himself, and stretching forth an arm, he gained possession of the deed by which the community of Limburg formally released its claims upon the products of the disputed vineyards. Arising, with the air of one accustomed to command even in his cups, he signed for his forester to approach, and aided by his young and nervous arm, he tottered from the room, leaving the banqueting hall, like a deserted field, a revolting picture of human infirmity in its degradation and neglect.

As the Count fell heavily upon his couch, clad as he had been at table, he shook the parchment towards his young attendant, till the folds rattled. Then closing his eyes, his deep and troubled breathing soon announced that the victor of this debauch lay like the vanquished, unconscious, feverish, and unmanned.

Thus terminated the well-known debauch of Hartenburg, a feat of physical endurance on the part of the stout baron who prevailed, that gained him little less renown among the boon companions of the Palatinate than he would have reaped from a victory in the field; and which, strange as it may now appear, derogated but little from any of the qualities of the vanquished.

CHAPTER VIII.

"And from the latticed gallery came a chant
Of psalms, most saint-like, most angelical,
Verse after verse sung out most holily."—ROGERS.

THE succeeding day was the Sabbath. The morning of the weekly festival was always announced to the peasants of the Jaegerthal with the usual summons to devotion.

The matin bell had been heard on the abbey walls, even before the light penetrated to the bottom of the deep vale; and all the pious had bent, in common, wherever the sounds happened to reach their ears, in praise and thanksgiving. But as the hours wore on, a more elevated display of Roman worship was prepared in the high mass, a ceremony addressed equally to the feelings and the senses.

The sun was fairly above the hills, and the season bland to seduction. The domestic cattle, relieved from their weekly toil, basked against the hill-side, ruminating in contentment, and filled with the quiet pleasures of their instinct. Children gambolled before the cottage doors; the husbandman loitered, in the habiliments that had borne the fashions of the Haard through many generations, regarding the silent growth of his crops, and the housewife hurried from place to place, in the excitement of simple domestic enjoyment. The month was the most grateful of the twelve, and well filled with hopes. The grass had reached its height, and was throwing out its exuberance, the corn was filling fast, and the vine began to give forth its clusters.

In the midst of this scene of rural tranquillity, the deep-toned bells of the abbey called the flock to its usual fold. Long practice had made the brotherhood of Limburg expert in all the duties that were necessary to the earthly administration of their functions. Even the peals of the bells were regulated and skilful. Note mournfully succeeded note, and there was not a silent dell, for miles, into which the solemn call did not penetrate. Bells were heard too from Duerckheim, and even from the wide plains beyond; but none rose fuller upon the air, or came so sweet and melancholy to the ear, as those which hung in the abbey towers.

Obedient to the summons, there was a gathering of all in the valley towards the gate of Limburg. A crowd appeared also in the direction of the gorge, for devotion, superstition, or curiosity, never failed to attract a multitude on these occasions, to witness mass in that celebrated conventual chapel. Among the latter came equally the skeptical and the believing, the young and the old, the fair and her who deemed it prudent to shade a matronly countenance with the veil, the idle, the half-converted follower of Luther, and the lover of music. It was customary for one of the brothers to preach, when mass was ended; and

Limburg had many monks that were skilled in the subtleties of the times, and some even who had names for eloquence.

With a management and coquetry that enter into most human devices that are intended to act on our feelings, especially in matters that it is not thought safe to confide too much to naked reason, the peals of the bells were continued long, with a view to effect. As group after group arrived, the court of the abbey slowly filled, until there appeared a congregation sufficiently numerous to gratify the self-love of even a clerical star of our own times. There was much grave salutation among the different dignitaries that were here assembled, for of all those who doff the cap in courtesy, perhaps the German is the most punctilious and respectful. As the neighboring city was fully represented in this assembly of the religious and curious, there was also a profitable display of the duties that are due to station. A herald might have obtained many useful hints, had he been there to note the different degrees of simple homage that were paid, from the Burgo-master to the Bailiff. Among the variety of idle and ill digested remarks that are lavished on the American people and their institutions, it is a received pleasantry to joke on their attachment to official dignities. But he who has not only seen, but observed both his own countrymen and strangers, will have had numberless occasions to remark that this, like most similar strictures, is liable to the imputation of vapidty, and of being proof of a narrow observation. The functionary that is literally a servant of the people, whatever may be his dispositions, can never triumph over his masters ; and, though it be an honest and commendable ambition to wish to be so distinguished, we need only examine the institutions to see that in this, as in most other similar circumstances, there is no strict analogy between ourselves and European nations. The remark has probably been made, because a respect for official authority has been found among us, when there was the expectation, and possibly the wish, to find anarchy.

At the high mass of Limburg there was more ceremony observed in ushering the meanest village dignitary to his place in the church than would be observed in conducting the head of this great republic to the high station he occupies ; and care was had, by an agent of the convent, to see that no one should approach the altar of the Lord

of the Universe, without his receiving the deference he might claim in virtue of his temporal rank ! Here, where all appear in the temple as they must appear in their graves, equals in dependence on divine support as they are equals in frailty, it will not be easy to understand the hardihood of sophistry which thus teaches humility and penitence with the tongue, and invites to pride and presumption in the practice ; and which, when driven to a reason for its conduct, defends itself against the accusation of inconsistency by recriminating the charge of envy !

There had been a suitable display of ceremony when several functionaries of Duerckheim appeared, but the strongest manifestation of respect was reserved for a burgher, who did not enter the gates until the people were assembled in the body of the church. This personage, a man whose hair was just beginning to be gray, and whose solid, vigorous frame denoted full health and an easy life, came in the saddle ; for at the period of which we write, there was a bridle path to the portal of Limburg. He was accompanied by a female, seemingly his spouse, who rode an ambling nag, bearing on the crupper a crone that clung to her well-formed waist, with easy, domestic familiarity, but like one unused to her seat. A fair-haired, rosy girl sat the pillion of the father, and a serving-man, in a species of official livery, closed the cavalcade.

Sundry of the more substantial citizens of Duerckheim hastened to the reception of this little party, for it was Heinrich Frey, with Meta, her mother, and Ilse, that came unexpectedly to the mass of Limburg. The affluent and flourishing citizen was ushered to the part of the church or chapel, where especial chairs were reserved for such casual visits of the neighboring functionaries, or for any noble that devotion, or accident, might lead to worship at the abbey's altars.

Heinrich Frey was a stout, hale, obstinate, sturdy burgher, in whom prosperity had a little cooled benevolence, but who, had he escaped the allurements of office and the recollection of his own success, might have passed through life as one that was wanting in neither modesty nor humanity. He was, in short, on a diminished scale, one of those examples of desertion from the ranks of mankind to the corps d'élite of the lucky, that we constantly witness among the worldly and fortunate. While a youth, he had been sufficiently considerate for the burdens and

difficulties of the unhappy ; but a marriage with a small heiress, and subsequent successes, had gradually brought him to a view of things that was more in unison with his own particular interests, than it was either philosophical or Christian-like. He was a firm believer in that dictum which says none but the wealthy have sufficient interest in society to be intrusted with its control, though his own instinct might have detected the sophistry, since he was daily vacillating between opposing principles, just as they happened to affect his own particular concerns. Heinrich Frey gave freely to the mendicant, and to the industrious ; but when it came to be a question of any serious melioration of the lot of either, he shook his head, in a manner to imply a mysterious political economy, and uttered shrewd remarks on the bases of society, and of things as they were established. In short, he lived in an age when Germany, and indeed all Christendom, was much agitated by a question that was likely to unsettle not only the religion of the day, but divers other vested interests ; and he might have been termed the chief of the conservative party, in his own particular circle. These qualities, united to his known wealth ; a reputation for high probity, which was founded on the belief that he was fully able to repair any pecuniary wrong he might happen to commit ; a sturdy maintenance of his own opinions, that passed with the multitude for the consistency of rectitude ; and a perfect fearlessness in deciding against all those who had not the means of disputing his decrees, had procured for him the honor of being the first Burgomaster of Duerckheim.

Were the countenance a certain index of the qualities of the mind, a physiognomist might have been at a loss to discover the motives which had induced Ulricka Hailtzinger, not only the fairest but the wealthiest maiden of the town, to unite herself in marriage with the man we have just delineated. A mild, melancholy, blue eye, that retained its lustre in despite of forty years, a better outline of features than is common to the region in which she dwelt, and a symmetry of arm and bust that, on the other hand, is rather peculiar to the natives of Germany, still furnished sufficient evidence of the beauty for which she must have been distinguished in early life. In addition to these obvious and more vulgar attractions, the matronly partner of Heinrich had an expression of feminine delicacy and intelligence, of elevated views, and even of mys-

terious aspirations, which rendered her a woman that a nice observer of nature might have loved to study—and have studied to love.

In personal appearance, Meta was a copy of her mother, engrafted on the more ruddy health and less abstracted habits of the father. Her character will be sufficiently developed as we proceed in the tale. We commit Ilse to the reader's imagination, which will readily conceive the sort of attendant that has been introduced.

The Herr Heinrich did not take possession of his customary post before the high altar, without causing the stir and excitement among the simple peasants of the Jaegerthal, and the truant Duerckheimers who were present, that became his condition in life. But even city importance cannot predominate for ever in the house of God, and the bustle gradually subsiding, expectation began to take precedence of civic rank.

The Abbey of Limburg stood high among the religious communities of the Rhine, for its internal decorations, its wealth, and its hospitality. The chapel was justly deemed a rare specimen of monastic taste, nor was it wanting in most of those ornaments and decorations that render the superior buildings, devoted to the service of the Church of Rome, so imposing to the senses, and so pleasing to the admirers of solemn effect. The building was vast, and, as prevailed throughout that region and in the century of which we write, sombre. It had numerous altars, rich in marbles and pictures, each celebrated in the Palatinate for the kind mediation of the particular saint to whom it was dedicated, and each loaded with the votive offerings of the suppliant, or of the grateful. The walls and the nave were painted *al fresco*, not indeed with the pencil of Raphael, or Buonorotti, but creditably, and in a manner to heighten the beauty of the place. The choir was carved in high relief, after a fashion much esteemed, and that was admirably executed in the middle states of Europe, no less than in Italy, and whole flocks of cherubs were seen poising on the wing around the organ, the altar, and the tombs. The latter were numerous, and indicated, by their magnificence, that the bodies of those who had enjoyed the world's advantages slept within the hallowed precincts.

At length a door, communicating with the cloisters, opened, and the monks appeared, walking in procession. At their head came the Abbot, wearing his mitre, and

adorned with the gorgeous robes of his ecclesiastical office. Two priests, decorated for the duties of the altar, followed, and then succeeded the professed and the assistants, in pairs. The whole procession swept through the aisles in stately silence ; and, after making the tour of most of the church, paying homage and offering prayers at several of the most honored altars, it passed into the choir. Father Bonifacius was seated on his episcopal throne, and the rest of the brotherhood occupied the glossy stalls reserved for such occasions. During the march of the monks, the organ breathed a low accompaniment, and, as they became stationary, its last strain died in the vaulted roof. At this moment the clattering of horses' hoofs was audible without, causing the startled and uneasy priests to suspend the mass. The rattling of steel came next, and then the heavy tread of armed heels was heard on the pavement of the church itself.

Emich of Hartenburg came up the principal aisle, with the steady front of one confident of his power, and claiming deference. He was accompanied by his guests, the Knight of Rhodes and Monsieur Latouche, while young Berchthold Hintermayer kept at his elbow, like one accustomed to be in close attendance. A small train of unarmed dependents brought up the rear. There was a seat of honor, in the choir itself, and near the master altar, to which it was usual to admit princes and nobles of high consideration. Passing through the crowd that had collected at the railing of the choir, the Count inclined towards one of the lateral aisles, and was soon face to face with the Abbot. The latter arose, and slightly recognized the presence of his guest, while the whole brotherhood imitated his example, though with greater respect ; for, as we have said, it was usual to pay this homage to worldly rank, even in the temple. Emich seated himself, with a scowl on his visage, while his two noble associates found seats of honor near. Berchthold stood at hand.

An inexperienced eye could have detected no outward signs of his recent defeat, in the exterior of Wilhelm of Venloo. His muscles had already regained their tone, and his entire countenance its usual expression of severe authority, a quality for which it was more remarkable than for any lines of mortification or of thought. He glanced at the victor, and then, by a secret sign, communicated with a lay brother. At this moment the mass commenced.

Of all the nations of Christendom, this, compared with its numbers, is the least connected with the Church of Rome. The peculiar religious origin of the people, their habits of examination and mental independence, and their prejudices (for the Protestant is no more free from this failing than the Catholic) are likely to keep them long separated from any policy, whether of Church or State, that exacts faith without investigation, or obedience without the right to remonstrate. An opinion is sedulously disseminated in the other hemisphere that busy agents are rapidly working changes in this respect, and a powerful party is anxiously anticipating great ecclesiastical and political results from the return of the American nation to the opinions of their ancestors of the middle ages. Were the fact so, it would give us little concern, for we do not believe salvation to be the peculiar province of sects; but, had we any apprehensions of the consequences of such a conversion, they would not be excited by the accidental accumulations of emigrants in towns, or on the public works in which the country is so actively engaged. We believe that where one native Protestant becomes a Catholic in America, ten emigrant Catholics drop quietly into the ranks of the prevailing sects; and, without at all agitating the point of which is the gainer or the loser by the change, we shall proceed to describe the manner of the mass, as a ceremony, that ninety-nine in a hundred of our readers have never had, nor probably ever will have, an opportunity of witnessing.

There is no appeal to the feelings of man which has given rise to opinions so decidedly at variance as those which are entertained of the Roman ritual. To one description of Christians these ceremonies appear to be vain mummeries, invented to delude, and practised for unjustifiable ends; while to another they contain all that is sublime and imposing in human worship. As is usual in most cases of extreme opinions, the truth would seem to lie between the two. The most zealous Catholic errs when he would maintain the infallibility of all who minister at the altar, or when he overlooks the slovenly and irreverent manner in which the most holy offices are so frequently performed; and, surely, the Protestant who quits the temple, in which justice has been done to the formula of this Church, without perceiving that there is deep and sublime devotion in its rites, has steeled his feelings against the ad-

mission of every sentiment in favor of a sect that he is willing to proscribe. We belong to neither class, and shall, therefore, endeavor to represent things as they have been seen, not disguising or affecting a single emotion because our fathers happened to take refuge in this western world to set up altars of a different shade of faith.

The interior of the Abbey-church of Limburg, as has just been stated, was renowned in Germany for its magnificence. Its vaulted roof was supported by many massive pillars, and ornamented with scriptural stories, by the best pencils of that region. The grand altar was of marble, richly embellished with agate, containing as usual a labored representation of the blessed Mary and her deified child. A railing of exquisite workmanship and richly gilded, excluded profane feet from this sanctified spot, which, in addition to its fixtures, was now glittering with vessels of gold and precious stones, being decorated for the approaching mass. The officiating priests wore vestments stiffened with golden embroidery, while the inferior attendants were as usual clad in white, and bound with scarfs of purple.

Upon this scene of gorgeous and elaborate splendor, in which the noble architecture united with the minute preparations of the service to lead the spirit to lofty contemplations, the chant of the monks, and the tones of the organ, broke in a deep and startling appeal to the soul. Lives dedicated to the practices of their community, had drilled the brotherhood into perfection, and scarce a note issued among the vaults that was not attuned to the desired effect. Trombones, serpents, and viols, lent their aid to increase the solemn melody of powerful masculine voices, which were so blended with the wind instrument as to comprise but one deep, grand, and grave sound of praise. Count Emich turned on his seat, clenching the handle of his sword, as if the clamor of the trumpet were in his ears: then his unquiet glance met that of the Abbot, and his chin fell upon a hand. As the service proceeded, the zeal of the brotherhood seemed to increase, and, as it was afterwards remarked, on no occasion had the mass of Limburg, at all times known for its power in music, been so remarkable for its strong and stirring influence. Voice rolled above voice, in a manner that must be heard to be understood, and there were moments when the tones of the instruments, full and united as they were, appeared drowned

in the blending of a hundred human aspirations. From the deepest of one of these solemn peals there arose a strain, at whose first tone all other music was hushed. It was a single human voice, of that admixture of the male and female tones which seems nearest allied to the supernatural, being in truth, a contralto of great compass, roundness, and sweetness. Count Emich started, for, when these heavenly strains broke upon his ear, they seemed to float in the vault above the choir; nor could he, as the singer was concealed, assure himself of the delusion, while the solo lasted. He dropped his sword, and gazed about him, for the first time that morning, with an expression of human charity. The lips of young Berchthold parted in admiration, and as he just then met the blue eye of Meta, there was an exchange of gentle feeling in that quiet and secret glance. In the meantime, the chant proceeded. The single unearthly voice that had so stirred the spirits of the listeners ceased, and a full chorus of the choir concluded the hymn.

The Count of Leiningen drew a breath so heavy that it was audible to Bonifacius. The latter suffered his countenance to unbend, and, as in the case of the youthful pair, the spirit of concord appeared to soothe the tempers of these fierce rivals. But here commenced the ritual of the mass. The rapid utterance of the officiating priest, gesticulations which lost their significance by being blended and indistinct, and prayers in a tongue that defeated their object by involving instead of rendering the medium of thought noble and clear, united to weaken the effect produced by the music. Worship lost its character of inspiration, by assuming that of business, neither attracting the imagination, influencing the feelings, nor yet sufficiently convincing the reason. Abandoning all these persuasive means, too much was left to the convictions of a naked and settled belief.

Emich of Hartenburg gradually resumed his repulsive mien, and the effect of all that he had so lately felt was lost in cold indifference to words that he did not comprehend. Even young Berchthold sought the eye of Meta less anxiously, and both the Knight of Rhodes and Monsieur Latouche gazed listlessly towards the throng grouped before the railing of the choir. In this manner did the service commence and terminate. There was another hymn, and a second exhibition of the power of music,

though with an effect less marked than that which had been produced when the listeners were taken by surprise.

Against a column, near the centre of the church, was erected a pulpit. A monk rose from his stall, at the close of the worship, and, passing through the crowd, ascended its stairs like one about to preach. It was Father Johan, a brother known for the devotedness of his faith and the severity of his opinions. The low receding forehead, the quiet but glassy eye, and the fixedness of the inferior members of the face, might readily have persuaded a physiognomist that he beheld a heavy enthusiast. The language and opinions of the preacher did not deny the expectations excited by his exterior. He painted, in strong and ominous language, the dangers of the sinner, narrowed the fold of the saved within metaphysical and questionable limits, and made frequent appeals to the fears and to the less noble passions of his audience. While the greater number in the church kept aloof, listening indifferently, or gazing at the monuments and other rich decorations of the place, a knot of kindred spirits clustered around the pillar that supported the preacher's desk, deeply sympathizing in all his pictures of pain and desolation.

The sharp, angry, and denunciatory address of Father Johan was soon ended; and, as he re-entered the choir, the Abbot rose and retired to the cloisters, followed by most of the brotherhood. But neither the Count of Hartenburg, nor any of his train, seemed disposed to quit the church so soon. An air of expectation appeared, also, to detain most of those in the body of the building. A monk, towards whom many longing eyes had been cast, yielded to the general and touching appeal, and quitting his stall, one of high honor, he took the place just vacated by Father Johan.

The movement was no sooner made, than the name of Father Arnolph, the Prior, or the immediate spiritual governor of the community, was buzzed among the people. Emich arose, and, accompanied by his friends, took a station near the pulpit, while the dense mass of uplifted and interested faces, that filled the middle aisle, proclaimed the interest of the congregation. There was that in the countenance and air of Father Arnolph to justify this plain demonstration of sympathy. His eye was mild and benevolent, his forehead full, placid and even, and the

whole character of his face was that of winning philanthropy. To the influence of this general and benevolent expression, must be added evident signs of discipline, much thought, and meek hope.

The spiritual part of such a man was not likely to belie the exterior. His doctrine, like that of the divine being he served, was charitable and full of love. Though he spoke of the terrors of judgment, it was with grief rather than with menace; and it was when dwelling on the persuasive and attractive character of faith, that he was most earnest and eloquent. Again Emich found his secret intentions shaken, and his frown relaxed to gleamings of sympathy and interest. The eye of the preacher met that of the stern baron, and, without making an alarming change of manner, he continued, as it were, by a natural course of thought—"Such is the Church in its purity, my hearers, let the errors, the passions, or the designs of man pervert it in what manner they may. The faith I preach is of God, and it partakes of the godlike qualities of His divine essence. He who would impute the sins of its mistaken performance to aught but his erring creatures, casts odium on that which is instituted for his own good; and he who would do violence to its altars, lifts a hand against a work of omnipotence!"

With these words in his ears, Emich of Hartenburg turned away, and passed musingly up the church.

CHAPTER IX.

"Japhet, I cannot answer thee."—BYRON.

THE Abbey of Limburg owed its existence and its rich endowments chiefly to the favor of an emperor of Germany. In honor of this great patron, an especial altar, and a gorgeous and elaborate tomb, had been erected. Similar honors had been also paid to the Counts of Leiningen, and to certain other noble families of the vicinity. These several altars were in black marble, relieved by ornaments of white, and the tombs were decorated with such heraldic devices as marked the particular races of the different individuals. They stood apart from those already described in the principal church, in a sort of crypt, or

semi-subterranean chapel, beneath the choir. Thither Count Emich held his way, when he quitted the column against which he had leaned while listening to the sermon of Father Arnolph.

The light of the upper church had that soft and melancholy tint which is so peculiar and so ornamental to a Gothic edifice. It entered through high, narrow windows of painted glass, coloring all within with a hue that it was not difficult for the imagination to conceive had some secret connection with the holy character of the place. The depth and the secluded position of the chapel rendered this light still more gloomy and touching in the crypt. When the Count reached the pavement, he felt its influence deeply, for few descended into that solemn and hallowed vault without becoming sensible to the religious awe that reigned around. Emich crossed himself, and, as he passed before the altar reared by his race, he bent a knee to the mild and lovely female countenance that was there to represent the Mother of Christ. He thought himself alone, and he uttered a prayer; for, though Emich of Leiningen was a man that rarely communed seriously with God when exposed to worldly and deriding eyes, he had in his heart deep reverence for his power. As he arose, a movement at his elbow attracted a look aside.

"Ha!—Thou here, Herr Prior!" he exclaimed, suppressing as much of his surprise as self-command enabled him to do with success; "Thou art swift in thy passage from the stall to the pulpit, and swifter from the pulpit to the chapel!"

"We that are vowed to lives of monkish devotion, need to be often at all. Thou wert kneeling, Emich, before the altar of thy race?"

"By St. Benedict, thy patron! but thou hast, in good sooth, found me in some such act, holy father. A weakness came over me, on entering into this gloomy place, and I would fain do reverence to the spirits of those who have gone before me."

"Callest thou the desire to pray a weakness? At what shrine could one of thy name worship more fittingly than at this, which has been reared and enriched by the devout of his own kindred; or in what better mood canst thou look into thyself, and call upon divine aid, than in that thou hast mentioned?"

"Herr Prior, thou overlookest the occasion of my visit,

which is to hear the Abbey mass, and not to confess and be shrived."

"It is long since thou hast had the benefit of these sacred offices, Emich!"

"Thou hast done well in thy way, father, at the desk; and I question not that the burghers of Duerckheim and their gossips will do thee credit in their private discourses. Thy fame as a preacher is not of mean degree even now, and this effort of to-day would well-nigh gain thee a bishopric, were the women of our valley in the way of moving Rome. How fareth it with the most holy Abbot this morning, and with those two pillars of the community, the Fathers Siegfried and Cuno?"

"Thou sawest them in their places at the most holy mass."

"Fore heaven! but they are worthy companions! Believe me, father, more honest boon associates do not dwell in our merry Palatinate, nor men that I love in a better fashion, according to their merits! Did'st hear, reverend Prior, of their visit to Hartenburg, and of their deeds in the flesh?"

"The humor of thy mind is quickly changed, Herr Count, and pity 'tis 'twere thus. I came not here to listen to tales of excesses in thy hold, nor of any forgetfulness of those who, having sworn to better things, have betrayed that they are merely men."

"Aye, and stout men, if any such dwell in the empire! I prize my good name as another, or I would tell thee the number of vessels that my keeper of the cellar sweareth are no better than so many men-at-arms fallen in a rally or an onset."

"This love of wine is the curse of our region and of the times. I would that none of the treacherous liquor should again enter the gates of Limburg!"

"God's justice! reverend Prior, thou wilt in sooth find some decrease of quantity in future," returned Emich, laughing, "for the disputed vineyards have at last found a single, and, though it might better come from thee, as one that hath often looked into my interior, as it were, by confession, a worthy master. I pledge thee the honor of a noble, that not a flask of that which thou so contemnest shall ever again do violence to thy taste."

The Count cast a triumphant glance at the monk, in the expectation, and possibly in the hope, that, notwithstanding

ing his professions of moderation, some lurking signs of regret might betray themselves at this announcement of the convent's loss. But Father Arnolph was what he seemed, a man devoted to the holy office he had assumed, and one but little influenced by worldly interests.

"I understand thee, Emich," he said mildly, but unmoved. "This scandal was not wanting at such a moment to bring obloquy upon a reverend and holy Church, against which its enemies have been permitted to make rude warfare, for reasons that are concealed in the inscrutable mysteries of him who founded it."

"Thou speakest in reason, monk, for, to say truth, yon fellow of Saxony, and his followers, who are anything but few or weak, begin to move many in this quarter to doubts and disobedience. Thou must most stoutly hate this brother Luther in thy heart, father!"

For the first time that day, the countenance of the Prior lost its even expression of benevolence. But the change was so imperceptible to a vulgar eye, as to escape the scrutiny of the Count; and the feeling, a lingering remnant of humanity, was quickly mastered by one so accustomed to hold the passions in subjection.

"The name of the schismatic hath troubled me!" returned the Prior, smiling mournfully at the consciousness of his own weakness; "I hope it has not been with a feeling of personal dislike. He stands on a frightful precipice, and from my soul do I pray, that not only he, but all the deluded that follow in his dangerous track, may see their peril in time to retire unharmed!"

"Father, thou speakest like one that wishest good to the Saxon rather than harm!"

"I think I may say, the words do not belie the thoughts."

"Nay, thou forgettest the damnable heresies he practiseth, and overlooketh his motive! Surely one that can thus sell soul and body for love of a wanton nun, hath little claim to thy charity!"

There was a slight glow on the temples of Father Arnolph.

"They have attributed to him this craven passion," he answered, "and they have tried to prove, that a mean wish to partake of the pleasures of the world, lies at the bottom of his rebellion; but I believe it not, and I say it not."

"God's truth! thou art worthy of thy holy office, Herr Prior, and I honor thy moderation. Were there more like

thee among us, we should have a better neighborhood, and less meddling with the concerns of others. With thee, I see myself no such necessity of his openly wiving the nun, for it is very possible to enjoy the gifts of life even under a cowl, should it be our fortune to wear it."

The monk made no answer, for he perceived he had to do with one unequal to understanding his own character.

"Of this we will say no more," he rejoined, after a brief and painful pause; "let us look rather to thine own welfare. It is said, Count Emich, that thou meditatest evil to this holy shrine; that ambition, and the longings of cupidity, have tempted thee to plot our abbey's fall, in order that none may stand between thine own baronial power and the throne of the Elector!"

"Thou art less unwilling to form unkind opinions of thy nearest neighbor, than of that mortal enemy of the Church, Luther, it would appear, Herr Prior. What hast thou seen in me, that can embolden one of thy charity to hazard this accusation?"

"I do but hazard what all in our convent think and dread. Hast thou reflected well, Emich, of this sacrilegious enterprise, and of what may be its fruits? Dost thou recall the objects for which these holy altars were reared, or the hand that laid the corner-stone of the edifice thou wouldst so profanely overthrow?"

"Look you, good Father Arnolph, there are two manners of viewing the erection of thy convent, and more especially of this identical church in which we stand. One of our traditions sayeth that the arch-knave himself had his trowel in thy masonry."

"Thou art of too high lineage, of blood too noble, and of intelligence too ripe, to credit the tale."

"These are points in which I pretend not to dip too deeply. I am no scholar of Prague or Wittenberg, that thou shouldst put these questions so closely to me. It were well that the brotherhood had bethought itself of this imputation in season, that the question might have been settled, for or against, as justice needed, when the learned and great among our fathers were met at Constance, in grave and general council."

Father Arnolph regarded his companion in serious concern. He too well knew the deplorable ignorance, and the consequent superstition, in which the great of his time were involved, to manifest surprise; but he also knew the

power the other wielded sufficiently to foresee the evils of such a union between force and ignorance. Still it was not his present object to combat opinions that were only to be removed by time and study, if indeed they can ever be eradicated, when fairly rooted in the human mind. He pursued his immediate design, therefore, avoiding a discussion, which, at that moment, might prove worse than useless.

“That the finger of evil mingles more or less with all things that come of human agency, may be true,” he continued, taking care that the expression of his eye should neither awaken the pride, nor arouse the obstinacy of the noble—“but when altars have been reared, and when the worship of the Most High God hath continued for ages, we have reason to hope that His holy spirit presideth in majesty and love around the shrines. Such hath been the case with Limburg, Count Emich; and doubt it not, we who stand here, holding this discourse, stand also in the immediate presence of that dread Being who created heaven and earth, who guideth our lives, and who will judge us in death!”

“God help us, Herr Prior! Thou hast already done thy office in the desk this day, and I see no occasion that thou shouldst doubly perform a function, that was so well acquitted at first. I like not the manner of being ushered, as it were unannounced, into so dread a presence as this thou hast just proclaimed. Were it but the Elector Friedrich, Emich of Leiningen could not presume to this familiarity, without some consultation as to its fitness.”

“In the eyes of the Being we mean, Electors and Emperors are equally indifferent. He loveth the meek, and the merciful, and the just, while he scourgeth them who deny his authority. But thou hast named thy feudal prince, and I will question thee in a manner suited to thy habits. Thou art, in truth, Emich of Leiningen, a noble of name in the Palatinate, and one known to be of long-established authority in these regions. Still art thou second, or even third, in worldly command, in this thy very country. The Elector and the Emperor both hold thee in check, and either is strong enough to destroy thee at pleasure, in thy vaunted hold of Hartenburg.”

“To the last I yield the means, if thou wilt, worthy Prior”—interrupted the Count—“but for the first, he must

needs dispose of his own pressing enemies, before he achieves this victory !”

Father Arnolph understood the other’s meaning, for it was no secret that Friedrich was, just then, so pressed as to sit on a tottering throne ; a circumstance that was known to have encouraged the long meditated designs of the Count of Hartenburg to get rid of a community, that thwarted his views, and diminished his local authority.

“Forgetting the Elector, we will turn only to the Emperor, then,” rejoined the Prior. “Thou believest him to be in his palace, and remote from thy country, and certainly he hath here no visible force to restrain thy rebellious hand. We will imagine that a family he protected—nay, that he loved—stood in the way of some of thy greedy projects, and that the tempter had persuaded thee it would be well to remove it, or to destroy it with the strong hand. Art thou weak enough, Count Emich, to listen to such advice, when thou knowest that the arm of Charles is long enough to reach from his distant Madrid to the most remote corner of Germany, and that his vengeance would be as sure as it would be fearful !”

“It would be a bold warfare, Herr Prior, that of Emich of Leiningen against Charles Quintus ! Left to mine own humor, holy monk, I would rather choose another enemy.”

“And yet thou wouldst war with one mightier than he ! Thou raisest thy impotent arm, and thy audacious will, against thy God ! Thou wouldst despise His promises, profane His altars, nay, thou wouldst fain throw down the tabernacle that He hath reared ! Dost thou think that Omnipotence will be a nerveless witness of this sin ; or that an eternal and benign wisdom will forget to punish ?”

“By St. Paul ! thou puttest the matter altogether in thine own interest, Father Arnolph, for there is yet no proof that this Abbey of Limburg hath any such origin, or, if it had, that it hath not fallen into disfavor, by the excesses of its own professed. ’Twere well to send for the right reverend Abbot, and those pillars of sanctity, the Fathers Cuno and Siegfried, to bear witness in thy behalf. God’s wisdom ! I reason better with those worthies, in such a matter, than with thee !”

Emich laughed, the sound echoing in that vaulted chapel to the ears of the monk, like the scoffing of a demon. Still, the natural equity of Father Arnolph told him that there was too much to justify the taunt of the noble, for he had

long and bitterly mourned the depravity of many of the brotherhood.

"I am not here to sit in judgment on those who err, but to defend the shrines at which I worship, and to warn thee from a fatal sin. If thy hand is ever lifted against these walls, it is raised against that which God hath blessed, and which God will avenge. But thou art of human feeling, Emich of Hartenburg ; and, though doubting of the sacred character of that which thou wouldst fain destroy, thou canst not deceive thyself concerning these tombs—In this holy chapel have prayers been often raised, and masses said, for the souls of thine own line !"

The Count of Leiningen looked steadily at the speaker. Father Arnolph had placed himself, without design, near the opening which communicated between that sombre chapel and the superior church. Rays of bright light shot through the eastern window, and fell upon the pavement at his feet, throwing around his form the mild and solemn lustre which comes from the stained glass of the Gothic ages. The services of the morning had also spread throughout the entire building, that soothing atmosphere which is usually the attendant of Roman worship. The incense had penetrated to the crypt, and unconsciously the warlike noble had felt its influence quieting his nerves and lulling the passions. All who have entered the principal Basilica of modern Rome, have been subject to a combination of moral and physical causes that produce the result we mean, and which, though more striking in that vast and glorious pile, resembling a world with attributes and an atmosphere of its own, is also felt in every Catholic temple of consequence in a lessened degree.

"Here lie my fathers, Arnolph," answered the Count, huskily ; "and here, as thou sayest, have masses been said for their souls !"

"And thou contemnest their graves—thou wouldst violate even their bones !"

"'Twere not an act for a Christian !"

"Look hither, Count. This is the monument of the good Emich, thy ancestor. He honored his God, and did not scruple to worship at our altars."

"Thou knowest, holy Prior, that I have often bared my soul at thy knees."

"Thou hast confessed, and hast been shrived ; that thou didst not lay up future griefs——"

“Say rather damnation”—interrupted one behind, whose voice, issuing suddenly from that sepulchral chapel, seemed to come from the tombs themselves—“Thou triflest, reverend Prior, with our holy mission, to deal thus tenderly with so sore a sinner.”

The Count of Leiningen had started, and even quailed, at the first words of interruption; but looking around, he beheld the receding front, the sunken eye, and the bending person of Father Johan.

“Monks, I leave you,” said Emich, firmly. “It is good for ye to pray, and to frequent these gloomy altars; but I, who am a soldier, cannot waste further time in your vaults. Herr Prior, farewell. Thou hast a guardian that will protect the good.”

Before the Prior could recover his voice, for he too had been taken by surprise, the Count stalked, with a heavy footstep, up the marble stairs, and the tread of his armed heel was soon heard on the flags above.

CHAPTER X.

“The way is but short; away—” *Armado.*

WHILE all must be conscious of the fearful infirmities that beset human nature, there are none so base as not to know that their being contains the seeds of that godlike principle which still likens them to their divine Creator. Virtue commands the respect of man, in whatever accidental stage of civilization, or of mental improvement, he may happen to exist; and he who practises its precepts is certain of the respect, though he may not always secure the protection, of his contemporaries.

As the Count of Leiningen walked down the rich and vast aisle of the Abbey-church, his thoughts vacillated between the impressions produced by the Prior, and his latent, but still predominant, intentions. He might have been likened to one who listened to the counsels of a good and of an evil genius; that exhorting to forbearance and mercy, and this tempting to violence by the usual array of flattery and hopes. While he brooded over the exactions of the community, which were founded on a legal superiority that was alike hurtful to his power and galling to his

pride, its manner of thwarting his views, and its constant opposition to his supremacy in the valley, motives of enmity that were justly heightened by the dissolute and audacious deportment of too many of its members, the effect of all was secretly opposed by the image of Father Arnolph, surrounded by the mild and noble characteristics of Christian virtue. Emich could not, though he fain would, chase from his imagination the impression of meekness, charity, and of self-denial, that a long acquaintance with the monk had made, and which the recent interview had served both to freshen and to render more deep. But a spectacle was prepared to meet his eyes in the court of the convent, that did as much towards weakening this happy influence of the Prior, by setting the pride of the noble in opposition to his better feelings, as could have been wished by the bitterest enemy of Limburg.

It has been said that the outer wall of the Abbey encircled the entire brow of the hill, or mountain, on which the convent stood. Though the buildings were spacious and numerous, the size of the little plain on the summit left ample space for exercise and air. Besides the cloisters, which were vast, though possessing the character of monkish seclusion, there were gardens in the rear of the Abbot's abode, and a court of considerable extent, immediately in front of the church. Athwart this court, in which sundry groups of the late congregation yet lingered, was drawn up, in military order, a band of soldiers, wearing the colors, and acknowledging the authority, of the Elector Friedrich. The secret signal given by Father Bonifacius, when the Count entered the choir, had prepared this unwelcome sight for his neighbor.

While the men-at-arms leaned on their arquebuses, in grave attention to discipline, the Knight of Rhodes and the Abbé were occupied in paying their court to the fair wife of the Burgomaster of Duerckheim, and to her scarce fairer daughter. Young Berchthold stood aloof; watching the interview with feelings allied equally to envy and jealousy.

"A fair morning and a comfortable mass to you, high-born Emich!" cried the husband and father heartily, but lifting his cap, as the noble approached the spot where the burgher stood, waiting for this meeting ere he put foot into the stirrup; "I had thought the sight of your fathers' altar was like to cheat me of this honor, and to send me

away without a word from your friendly and much-prized grace."

"Between thee and me, Heinrich, this slight could not happen," answered the Count, grasping the hand of the Burgomaster, which he squeezed with the cordiality and vigor of a soldier. "How fareth it with all in Duerckheim, that town of my affection, not to say of my right?"

"As you could wish, noble Count, and well-disposed to the house of Leiningen. In all that pertaineth to love of your name and race, we lack nothing."

"This is well, honest Heinrich; it may yet be better—But thou wilt do me grace this summer morning?"

"Nay, it is for your grace to command in this particular, and for one like me to obey."

"Herr Heinrich, hast looked well at these knaves of Friedrich? Ha! are they not melancholy and ill-disposed at being cooped with Benedictines, when there are stirring times in the Palatinate, and when their master hath as much as he can do to hold his court in Heidelberg! Seest thou aught of this?"

Emich had dropped his voice, and the burgher was not a man to express more in answer than the circumstances actually required. He looked eloquently, however, and the exchange of glances between him and the Count betrayed the nature of the undertaking that connected the castle and the city.

"You spoke of commanding my duty, mein Herr Graf, and it is fitting I should know in what manner to do you pleasure."

"Nay, 'tis no pain-giving penance I ask. Turn my horse's head towards Hartenburg, and share of my poor fare, with a loving welcome, for an hour or so."

"I would it were within compass, my Lord Count," returned Heinrich, casting a doubting look towards Meta and his wife—"but these Sunday masses are matters in which the women love to deal; and from the first sound of the matin bell, till we shut the gates at even, I scarce call myself master of a thought."

"By the Virgin! 'Twould seem ill indeed, did not Hartenburg contain a roof to shelter all of thy name and love."

"There are noble gentlemen already on your hospitality, and I would not fain——"

"Name them not. This in the gay doublet, that wear-eth the white cross, is but a houseless Knight of Rhodes,

one that wandereth like the dove from the ark, uncertain where to place his foot ; and he of black vestments, an idle Abbé from among the French, who doth little else but prate with the women. Leave thy female gender in their hands, for they are much accustomed to these gallantries."

"Zum Henker ! most nobly born excellenz, I never doubted their handiness in all idlenesses, but my wife hath little humor for vain attentions of this nature, and not to conceal from my lord any of our humors, I will confess it is as little to my pleasure to witness so much ceremony with a woman. Were the well-born Ermengarde, your noble consort, in the castle, my female charge might be glad to pay their court to her, but in her absence I doubt that they will cause more encumbrance than they will afford satisfaction."

"Name it not, honest Heinrich, but leave the matter to me. As for these idlers, I will find them occupation when fairly out of the saddle ; so will I not excuse the youngest of thy name."

The warm, frank manner of the noble prevailed, though the arrangement was not altogether agreeable to the Burgomaster ; but in that age hospitality was always of so direct a character as seldom to admit of denial without sufficient excuse. Emich now paid his court to the females. Smoothing his moustache and beard, he saluted the cheeks of Ulricke, with affectionate freedom, and then, presuming on his years and rank, he pressed a kiss on the ruby lips of Meta. The girl blushed and laughed, and in her confusion courtesied, as if in acknowledgment of the grace from one of so high quality. Heinrich himself, though he so little liked the coquetry of the strangers, witnessed these liberties not only without alarm but with evident contentment.

"Many thanks, noble Emich, for this honor to my women," he cried, lifting his bonnet again. "Meta is not used to these compliments, and she scarce knoweth rightly how to acknowledge the grace, for to say truth, it is not often that her cheek feeleth the tickling of a beard. I am no saluter of her sex, and there are none in Duerckheim that may so presume."

"St. Denis defend me !" exclaimed the Abbé ; "in what shameful negligence have we fallen !" saluting the mild Ulricke on the instant, and repeating the same ceremony with the daughter, so suddenly, as to leave none present

time to recover from their surprise. "Sir Knight of Rhodes, we appear in this affair as but of indifferent breeding!"

"Hold, cousin of Viederbach," said Emich, laughing, while he placed a hand before his kinsman—"We forget, all this time, that we are in the court of Limburg, and that salutations which savor so much of earth may scandalize the holy Benedictines. We will to horse, and keep our gallantries for a better season."

The forward, impatient movement of young Berchthold was self-checked, and, swallowing his discontent, he turned aside to conceal his vexation.

In the meantime, the whole party prepared to mount. Although repulsed in his effort to obtain a salute from the fair girl, who had so passively received these liberties from his kinsman and the Abbé, the Knight of Rhodes busied himself in assisting the damsel upon the crupper of her father's saddle. A similar office was performed for Ulricke by the Count of Leiningen himself, and then the noble threw his own booted and heavy leg across the large and strong-jointed war-horse that was pawing the pavement of the court. The others imitated his example, even to the mounted servitors, who were numerous; when, doing stately reverence to the large crucifix that stood before them, the whole cavalcade ambled from the court.

There were many curious spectators around the outer gate, among whom were sundry of the more humble dependants of Hartenburg, purposely collected there, by an order of their lord, in the event of any sudden violence arising from his visit to the Abbey, together with a crowd of mendicants.

"Alms, great Emich! Alms, worthy and wealthy Burgomaster! God's blessing on ye both, and holy St. Benedict heed ye in his prayers! We are a-hungred and a-cold, and we crave alms at your honorable hands!"

"Give the rogues a silver pence," said the Count to the purse-bearer, who rode in his train. "They have a starving look, in sooth. These godly Benedictines have, of late, been so busied between their garrison and their masses, that they have forgotten to feed the poor. Come nearer, friend; art thou of the Jaegerthal?"

"No, noble Count. I come from a pilgrimage to a distant shrine, but want and suffering have befallen me by the way."

"Hast pressed the monks for charity? or dost thou find them too much engaged in godliness to remember human suffering?"

"Great Count, they give freely; but where there are many mouths to feed, there needs be much gold. I say naught against the holy community of Limburg, which is godly in charity, as in grace."

"Give the knave a kreutzer," growled Heinrich Frey; "hast thou aught to show in the way of authority for undertaking this pilgrimage, and for assailing the Elector's subjects and servitors in a public horse-path?"

"Naught but this, illustrious Burgomaster,"—Heinrich wore his chain of office—"naught but the commands of my confessor, and this pass of our own chief men."

"Callest this naught? Thou speakest of a legal instrument of high quality, an' it were but a copy of silly rhymes! Hold! thou must not be led into temptation by too much want. Meta, wench, hast a kreutzer?"

"Here is a silver pence, that may better suit the pilgrim's necessities, father."

"God keep thee, child! Dost expect to escape want thyself, with such prodigality? But stay—there are many of them, and the piece justly distributed might do good. Come nearer, friends. Here is a silver zwanziger, which you will divide honestly into twenty parts, of which two are for the stranger, for to him are we most indebted by the commands of God, and one for each inhabitant of the valley, not forgetting the poor woman that, in your haste, and by reason of her years, you have prevented from drawing near. For this boon, I ask prayers of you in behalf of the Elector, the city of Duerckheim, and the family of Frey."

So saying, the Burgomaster pushed ahead, and was soon at the foot of the mountain of Limburg. The train of footmen, who had lingered to witness the largess of the magistrate, and who had considered the indifference of Emich as what was no more than natural in one placed by Providence in a situation so far removed from vulgar wants, was about to follow, when a lay-brother of the convent touched one of the party on the arm, signing for him to re-enter the court.

"Thou art needed further, friend," whispered the lay-brother. "Amuse thyself with these men-at-arms till they retire; then seek the cloisters."

A nod sufficed to tell the lay-brother that he was understood, and he immediately disappeared. The follower of Count Emich did as commanded, loitering in the court until the object of the Abbot was accomplished, that of exhibiting the protection of the Elector to his dangerous neighbor, and the arquebusiers marched to their quarters. The road was no sooner clear, than the peasant who had been detained proceeded to do as he had been ordered.

In each conventual edifice of the other hemisphere, there is an inner court surrounded by low and contemplative arcades called the cloisters. The term which is given to the seclusion of monastic life in general, and to the objects of the institution itself, in an architectural sense, is limited to the secluded and sombre piazzas just mentioned. When this part of the building is decorated, as often happens, with the elaborate ornaments of the Gothic style, it is not easy to conceive a situation more happily imagined for the purposes of reflection, self-examination, and religious calm. To us the cloisters have ever appeared pregnant with the poetry of monkish existence, and, Protestant as we are, we never yet entered one without feeling the influence of that holy and omnipotent power that is thought to be propitiated by conventual seclusion. In Italy, the land of vivid thought and of glorious realities, the pencils of the greatest masters have been put in requisition to give the cloisters a mild attraction, blended with lessons of instruction, that are in strict consonance with their uses. Here are found some of the finest remains of Raphael, of Domenichino, and of Andrea del Sarto; and the traveller now enters vaulted galleries, that the monk so long paced in religious hope or learned abstraction, to visit the most prized relics of art.

The dependant of Count Emich had no difficulty in finding his way to the place in question, for, as usual, there was a direct communication between the cloisters of Limburg and the church. By entering the latter and taking a lateral door, which was known to lead to the sacristy, he found himself beneath the arcades, in the midst of the touching seclusion described. Against the walls were tablets with Latin inscriptions, in honor of different brothers who had been distinguished by piety and knowledge; and here and there was visible, in ivory or stone, that constant monitor of Catholic worship, the crucifix.

The stranger paused, for a single monk paced the ar-

cedes, and his mien was not inviting for one who doubted of his reception. At least so thought the dependant of Emich, who might easily have mistaken the chastened expression of Father Arnolph's features, clouded as they now were with care, for severity.

"What wouldst thou?" demanded the Prior, when a turn brought him face to face with the intruder.

"Reverend monk, thy much-prized blessing."

"Kneel, and receive it, son. Thou art doubly blest; in seeking consolation from the Church, and in avoiding the fatal heresies of the times."

The Prior repeated the benediction, made the usual sign of grace, and motioned for the other to rise.

"Wouldst thou aught else?" he asked, observing that the peasant did not retire, as was usual for those who received this favor.

"Naught—unless yonder brother hath occasion for me."

The face of Siegfried was thrust through a door which led to the cells. The countenance of the Prior changed like that of one who had lost all confidence in the intentions of his companion, and he pursued his way along the arcade. The other glided past, and disappeared by the door which he had been covertly invited to enter.

It has already been said that the Benedictine is an order of hospitality. A principal building of the hill was especially devoted to the comforts of the Abbot, and to those of the travellers it was always his duty, and in the case of Father Bonifacius scarcely less often his pleasure, to entertain. Here were seen some signs of the great wealth of the monastery, though it was wealth chastened by forms, and restricted by opinion; still there was little of self-denial, or indeed of any of that self-mortification which is commonly thought to be the inseparable attendant of the cell. The rooms were wainscoted with dark oak; emblems of religious faith, in costly materials, abounded; nor was there any want of velvet and other stuffs, all however of sober colors, though of intrinsic value. Father Siegfried ushered the peasant into one of the most comfortable of these rooms. It was the cabinet of the Abbot, who, having thrown aside the robes of office in which he so lately appeared in the choir, and, ungirt and divested of all the churchly pomp in which he had just shown himself to the people, was now taking his ease,

with the indolence of a student, and with some of the negligence of a debauchee.

"Here is the youth I have named to you, holy Abbot," said Father Siegfried, motioning his companion to advance.

Bonifacius laid down a parchment-covered and illuminated volume, one but lately issued from the press, rubbing his eyes like a man suddenly roused from a dreamy abstraction.

"Truly, Brother Siegfried, these knaves of Leipzig have done wonders with their art! Not a word can I find astray, or a thought concealed. God knows to what pass of information this excess of knowledge, so long sacred to the learned, may yet lead us! The office of a librarian will no longer be of rare advantages, or scarcely of repute."

"Have we not proofs of the evil in the growing infidelity, and in the manifest insubordination of the times?"

"It were better for all their souls, and their present repose, that fewer did the thinking in this troublesome world—Thou art named Johan, son?"

"Gottlob, most reverend Abbot, by your leave, and with the Church's favor."

"'Tis a pious appellation, and I trust thou dost not forget to obey the duty of which it should hourly remind thee."

"In that particular I can say that I praise God, father, for all the benefits I receive, and were they double what they are, I feel that within me which says I could go on rendering thanks forever, for gracious gifts."

The answer of Gottlob caused the Abbot to turn his head. After studying the demure expression of the young man's face intently he continued—

"This is well; thou art a huntsman in Count Emich's household?"

"His cow-herd, holy Abbot, and a huntsman in the bargain; for a more scampering, self-losing trouble-giving family is not to be found in the Palatinate, than this of mine!"

"I remember it was a cow-herd; thou dealt a little lightly with my brother Siegfried here, in pretending thou wert of Duerckheim, and not of the castle."

"To speak fairly to your reverence, there was some business between us; for be it known to you, holy Abbot, a cow-herd is made to suffer for all the frolics of his beasts, and so I preferred to do penance simply for my own back-

slidings, without white-washing the conscience of all Lord Emich's cattle in the bargain."

The Abbot turned again, and this time his look was still longer and more scrutinizing than before.

"Hast thou heard of Luther?"

"Does your reverence mean the drunken cobbler of Duerckheim."

"I mean the monk of Wittenberg, knave: though, by St. Benedict! thou hast not unaptly named the rebel; for truly doth he cobble that would fain mend the offices or discipline of Holy Church! I ask if thou hast sullied thy understanding and weakened thy faith, by lending ear to this damnable heresy, that is abroad in our Germany?"

"St. Benedict and the blessed Maria keep your reverence in mind, according to your deserts? What hath a poor cow-herd to do with questions that trouble the souls of the learned, and cause even the peaceably disposed to become quarrelsome and warlike?"

"Thou hast received a schooling above thy fortune—Art of the Jaegerthal?"

"Born and nurtured, holy Abbot. We are of long standing in the valley, and few families are better known for skill in rearing beeves, or for dealing cunningly with a herd, than that of which I come, humble and poor as I may seem to your reverence."

"I doubt but there is as much seeming as reality in this indifferent opinion of thyself. But thou hast had an explanation with Brother Siegfried, and we count on thy services. Thou knowest the power of the Church, son, and cannot be ignorant of its disposition to deal mercifully with those that do it homage, nor of its displeasure when justly angered. We are disposed to deal in increased kindness with those who do not stray from the fold, at this moment when the Devils are abroad scattering the ignorant and helpless."

"Notwithstanding all you have said, most reverend Abbot, concerning the trifle I have gleaned in the way of education, I am too little taught to understand aught but plain speech. In the matter of a bargain it might be well to name the conditions clearly, lest a poor, but well-meaning, youth should happen to be damned, simply because he hath little knowledge of Latin, or cannot clearly understand what hath not been clearly said."

"I have no other meaning than that thy pious conduct

will be remembered at the altar and the confessional ; and that indulgences, and other lenities, will not be forgotten when there is question of thee."

"This is excellent, holy Abbot, for those that may profit by it—but, St. Benedict help us! of what account would it all be, were Lord Emich to threaten his people with the dungeon and stripes, should any dare to frequent the altars of Limburg, or otherwise to have dealings with the reverend brotherhood?"

"Dost think our prayers, or our authority, cannot penetrate the walls of Hartenburg?"

"Of that, most powerful Bonifacius, I say nothing, since I never have yet profited in the way you mean. The dungeon of Hartenburg and I are not strangers to each other ; and, were I to speak my most intimate thoughts, it would be to say, that St. Benedict himself would find it no easy matter to open its doors, or to soften its pavements, so long as the Count was in an angry humor. Potz Tausend, holy Abbot! it is well to speak of miracles and of indulgences ; but let him who imagines that either is about to make that damp and soul-chilling hole warm and pleasant, pass a night within its walls in November! He may enter with as much faith in the Abbey prayers as he will ; but if he do not come forth with great dread of Lord Emich's displeasure, why, he is not flesh and blood, but a burning kiln in the form of mortality!"

Father Bonifacius saw that it was useless endeavoring to influence the mind of the cow-herd in the vulgar manner, and he had recourse to surer means. Motioning his companion to hand him a little casket, externally decorated with many of the visible signs of the Christian faith, he took out of it a purse, that wanted for neither size nor weight. The eyes of Gottlob glistened—had not the monks been much occupied in examining the gold, they might have suspected that the pleasure he betrayed was a little affected—and he manifested a strong disposition to know the contents of a bag that had so many outward signs of value.

"This will make peace and create faith between us," said the Abbot, handing a golden mark to Gottlob. "Here is that which the dullest comprehension can understand ; and whose merits, I doubt not, will be sufficiently clear to one of thy ready wit."

"Your reverence does not over-value my means," an-

swered the cow-herd, who pocketed the piece without further ceremony. "Were our good Mother of the Church to take this method of securing friends, she might laugh at all the Luthers between the Lake of Constance and the ocean, him of Wittenberg among the number: but, by some strange oversight, she has of late done more towards taking away the people's gold, than towards bestowing! I am rejoiced to find that the mistake is at last discovered; and chiefly am I glad, that one, poor and unworthy as I, has been among the first that she is pleased to make an instrument of her new intentions!"

The Abbot appeared at a loss to understand the character of his agent; but, being a worldly and selfish man himself, he counted rather loosely on the influence of a meditator whose potency is tacitly admitted by all of mercenary propensities. He resumed his seat, therefore, like one who saw little necessity for farther concealment, and went directly to the true object of the interview.

"Thou hast something to communicate from the Castle of Hartenburg, good Gottlob?"

"If it be your reverence's pleasure to listen."

"Proceed—Canst tell aught of the force Emich hath gathered in the hold?"

"Mein Herr Abbot, it is no easy matter to count varlets that go staggering about, from the moment the sun touches your Abbey towers, to that in which he sets behind the Teufelstein."

"Hast thou not means of separating them in divisions, and of making the enumerations of each apart?"

"Holy Abbot, that experiment hath failed. I divided them into the drunk and the sober; but, for the life of me, I could never get them all to be long enough of the same mind, to hunt up those that were in garrets and cellars; for while this slept off his debauch, that swallowed cup after cup, in a manner to recruit the drunkards as fast as they lost. It were far easier to know the Emperor's policy, than to count Lord Emich's followers!"

"Still they are many."

"They are and they are not, as one happens to view soldiership. In the way of draining a butt, Duke Friedrich would find them a powerful corps, even in an attack against his Heidelberg tun; and yet I doubt whether he would think them of much account in the pressing warfare he wageth."

"Go to—thou art too indirect in thy answers for the duty thou hast undertaken. Return the gold if thou refusest the service."

"I pray thee, reverend Abbot, to remember the risks I have already run in this desperate undertaking, and to consider that the trifle you have so munificently bestowed, is already more than earned by the danger of my ears, to say nothing of great loss of reputation, and some pricking of conscience."

"This clown hath tampered with thee, Father Siegfried," said the Abbot, in a tone of reproach to the attending monk: "he even dares to make light of our presence and office!"

"We have the means of recalling him to his respect, as well as to a remembrance of his engagements."

"Thou sayest true: let the remedies be applied—but hold!"

During this brief colloquy between the Benedictines, Father Siegfried had touched a cord, and a lay-brother, of vigorous frame, showed himself. At a signal from the monk, he laid a hand on an arm of the unresisting Gottlob, and was about to lead him from the room, when the last words of the Abbot, and another signal from Father Siegfried, caused him to pause.

Bonifacius leaned a cheek on his hand, and mused long on the policy of the step he was about to take. The relations between the Abbey and the Castle, to adopt diplomatic language, were precisely in that awkward state in which it was almost as hazardous to recede as to advance. To imprison a vassal of the Count of Hartenburg, might bring matters to an immediate issue; and yet, to permit him to quit the convent, was to deprive the brotherhood of the means of extracting the information it was so important to obtain, and to procure which had been the principal inducement of attending the debauch already described, at a moment when there was so little real amity between the revellers. The precaution of Emich had frustrated this well-laid scheme, and the result of the experiment had been too costly to admit of repetition. There was also hazard in permitting Gottlob to return to Hartenburg, for the expectations and hostile spirit of the Abbey had been so unadvisedly exposed to the hind, as to render it certain he would relate what had occurred. It was desirable, too, to maintain an appearance of confidence, al-

though so little was felt ; for the monk well knew, that next to friendship, its apparent existence was of account in preventing the usual expedients of open hostility. Agents were at Heidelberg, pressing the Elector on a point of the last concern to the welfare of the brotherhood ; and it was particularly material that Emich should not be driven to any overt act before the result of this mission was known. In short, these two little powers were in a condition similar to that in which some greater communities have been known to exist, instinctively alive to the opposing character of their respective interests, and yet tampering with the denouement, because neither was yet prepared to proclaim all it wished, meditated, and hoped to be able to attain. In the meantime, there was an ostensible courtesy between the belligerent parties, occasionally obscured by bursts of natural feeling, which, in politics, the world calls *bonhomie*, but which would, perhaps, be better termed by the frank designation of artifice.

The Abbot was so much accustomed to this sort of politic reflection, that all these considerations passed before his mind in less time than we have consumed in enumerating them. Still the pause was salutary ; for, when he resumed the discourse, he spoke like one whose decision was supported by thought.

“Thou wilt tarry with us a little, Gottlob, for the good of thy soul,” he said, making a sign that was understood by his inferiors.

“A thousand thanks, humane and godly Abbot. Next to the present good of my body, I look with most concern to the future condition of my poor soul ; and there is great comfort and consolation in your gracious words. It is but the soul of a poor man ; but, being my all, in the way of souls, it must needs be taken care of.”

“The discipline we meditate will be healthful. Brothers, lead the penitent to his cell.”

The singular indifference with which Gottlob heard his doom, might have given the Abbot motive for reflection, had he not been so much occupied by other thoughts. As it was, the hind accompanied the lay brother without resistance, and indeed with the manner of one who appeared to think he was a gainer by this especial notice from the community of Limburg. So natural and easy was the air of Gottlob, as they took the direction of a gloomy corridor, that Father Siegfried began to believe he had em-

ployed an agent whose mind, shrewd and peculiar as it seemed at times, was in truth subject to moments of more than usual imbecility and dulness. He placed the cowherd in a cell, pointed to a crucifix, its only article of furniture, and, without deeming it necessary even to secure the door, retired.

CHAPTER XI.

—————"The Lady Valeria is come
To visit you."—*Coriolanus*.

A SHORT ride brought the cavalcade of Count Emich to the gates of Hartenburg. When all had alighted, and the guests, with the more regular inmates of the castle, were ushered into the hall, the lord of the hold again saluted Ulrike and her daughter. This freedom was the privilege of his rank, and of his character as host ; and for its exercise, he once more received the grateful acknowledgments of Heinrich Frey. The females were then committed to the care of Gisela, the warder's daughter, who, in the absence of its more noble mistress, happened to be the presiding person of her sex in the place.

"Thou art thrice welcome, upright and loyal Heinrich !" exclaimed the Count, heartily, while he led the Burgomaster by the hand, into one of the rooms of honor—"None know thy worth, and thy constancy to thy friends, better than the master of this poor castle ; and none love thee better."

"Thanks, well-born Emich, and such duty as one of poor birth and breeding can and should pay to a noble so honored and prized. I am little used to courtesies, beyond those which we burghers give and take in the streets, and may not do myself full justice in the expression of reverence and respect, but I pray you, Herr Count, to take the desire for the performance."

"Wert thou the Emperor's most favored chamberlain, thy speech could not do thee more credit. Though Duerckheim be not Madrid, it is a well-respected and courtly city, and none need envy the Roman, or the Parisian, that dwelleth there. Here is my kinsman of Viederbach, a knight that Providence hath cast a little loosely upon the world since the downfall of his Mediterranean island of

Rhodes, and who hath travelled far and near, and he swears daily, thy town hath no parallel, for its dimensions."

"Considered as a mountain city of no great magnitude, meine Herren, we do not blush at the aspect of our ancient walls."

"Thou needest not, and thou must have noted that I spoke in reference to its size. Monsieur Latouche is a gentleman that cometh from the capital of King Francis itself; and no later than this morning, he remarked on the neatness, and wealth, and other matters of consideration, that make themselves apparent, even to the stranger, in thy well-governed and prosperous borough."

The Burgomaster acknowledged the compliment, by a profound inclination and a gratified eye, for no flattery is so palpable as not to meet a welcome with those who labor for public distinction; and Emich well knew, that the police and order of his city were weak spots in Heinrich Frey's humility.

"Lord Emich scarce does me justice," returned the pliant Abbé, "since I found many other causes of admiration. The deference that is paid to rank in thy populace, and the manner in which the convenience of the honorable is respected, are particularly worthy of commendation."

"The churchman is right, Lord Emich—for, of all the towns in Germany, I do not think it easy to find another in which the poor and base are so well taught to refrain from thrusting their importunities and disadvantages on the gentle, as in our Duerckheim. I think my lord the Count must have observed the strict severity and cautious justice of our rules in this particular."

"None know them better, nor does any heed them more. I cannot recall the moment, cousin Albrecht, when any unpleasant intrusion on my privileges hath ever occurred within its gates. But I keep you from refreshing yourselves, worthy friends. Give us leave a little;—we will seek you again, at your own convenience."

The Knight and the Abbé took this intimation of the desire of the Count to be alone with the Burgomaster in good part, and withdrew without unnecessary delay. When alone, Emich again took Heinrich Frey by the hand, and led him away into a part of the castle where none presumed to intrude without an especial errand. Here he entered one of those narrow rooms, which were devoted to secret uses, and which was well termed a closet, being in

effect but little larger and scarcely better lighted, than the straitened apartments to which we give the same appellation in these later times.

When fairly protected from observation, and removed beyond the danger of eaves-droppers and spies, the Count threw aside his cloak, unbuckled his sword-belt, and assumed the manner of one at his ease. The Burgomaster took a seat on a stool, in deference to his companion's rank; while the latter, without seeming sensible of the act, seated himself at his side, in the only chair that the closet contained. Whoever has had much intercourse with Asiatics, or with Mussulmans of the southern shore of the Mediterranean, must have frequently observed the silent, significant manner with which they regard each other, when disposed to court or to yield confidence; the eye gradually kindling, and the muscles of the mouth relaxing, until the feeling is fully betrayed in a smile. This is one of the means employed by men who dwell under despotic and dangerous governments, and where the social habits are much tinctured with violence and treachery, of assuring one another of secret faith and ready support. There is a sort of similar freemasonry in all conditions of life, in which frank and just institutions do not spread their mantle equally over the powerful and the weak, superseding, by the majesty of the law, the necessity of these furtive appeals to the pledges and sympathies of confidants. Such, in some degree, was the nature of the communication with which Emich of Hartenburg now commenced his private intercourse with Heinrich Frey. The Count first laid his square, bony hand on the knee of the Burgomaster, which he squeezed until the iron fingers were nearly buried in the fleshy protuberance. Each turned his head toward his companion, looking askance, as if they mutually understood the meaning of what was conveyed by this silent coquetry. Still, notwithstanding the apparent community of thought and confidence, the countenance and air of each was distinguished by the personal character and the social station of the individual. The eye of the Baron was both more decided, and more openly meaning, than that of the Burgomaster; while the smile of the latter appeared rather like a faint reflection of the inviting expression of the former, than the effect of any inward impulse.

"Hast heard of last night's success?" abruptly demanded the Count.

“Nothing of the sort hath gladdened me, Herr Count; my heart yearns to know all, if it touches your high interests.”

“The mass-singing rogues are stripped of their wine-tribute! Of that much are they fairly and legally disburthened! Thou knowest of our long-intended trial of heads; I had intended to have prayed thee to be a second at the banquet, but the presence of these idlers put some restraint on my hospitality. Thou wouldest have proved a stanch second in such an onset, Heinrich!”

“I thank my lord the Count, and shall deem the grace as good as accomplished in the wish. I am not worse than another at board, and may boast of some endurance in the way of liquor, but the seriousness of the times admonishes us, of civic authority, to be prudent. There is a wish in the people to be admitted to certain unreasonable and grave privileges, such as the right of vending their wares in the market-place at unseasonable hours, when the convenience of the burgomasters would be much vexed by the concession; and other similar innovations, against which we must make a firm stand, lest they come, in time, to invade our general authority and cause an unnatural convulsion. Were we to give way to pretensions so extravagant, Herr Count, the town would come to general confusion; and the orderly and respectable city of Duerckheim would justly merit to be compared to the huts of those countries of which they speak in the distant land of America, that hath so much, of late, given cause to writings and conversation. We need, therefore, look to the example set; for we have busy enemies, who make the most of the smallest indulgences. At another time, I would gladly have drained Heidelberg to your gracious honor.”

“Thou wouldest not have been in danger of observation here; and, by the three holy Kings of Koeln, I should know how to tutor any prying knave that might chance to thrust a curious eye within these walls! But thy discretion is worthy of thy prudence, Heinrich; for, with thee, I deem the time serious for all lovers of established order, and of the peace of mankind. What would the knaves, that they thus trouble thy authority? Are they not fed and clad? and do they not now possess privileges out of number? The greedy rogues, if left to their humors, would fain envy their betters each delicate morsel they carry to their

mouths, or each drop of generous rhenish that moistens their lips !”

“I fear, well-born Emich, that this spirit of covetousness is in their vile natures ! I have rarely consented to any little yielding to their entreaties, such as a wish to swell out the time of their merrymakings, or a desire like this of the market-place, that the taste of the indulgence hath not given a relish for fuller fare. No ; he that would govern quietly, and at his own ease, must govern thoroughly ; else shall we all become illiterate savages, fitter for the forests of these Indies, than for our present rational and charitable civilization.”

“Braver words were never uttered in thy council-hall, and well do I know the head that conceived them ! Had there been occasion to have summoned thee hither for the banquet, the excuse should have satisfied, though the vineyards were the forfeiture. But what didst think, friend Heinrich, of the priests to-day, and of their warlike company !”

“’Tis plain Duke Friedrich still upholds them ; and to deal frankly with my lord the Count, the men-at-arms have the air of fellows that are not likely to yield the hill without fair contention.”

“Thinkest thou thus, Burgomaster ? ’Twere a thousand pities that men of tried mettle should do each other harm, for the benefits and pleasure of a community of shaven Benedictines ! What is there to urge in favor of pretensions so audacious as these they prefer, and which are so offensive, both to me, as a noble of the empire, and to all of any note or possessions in Duerckheim ?”

“They lay great stress, Herr Count, on the virtue of ancient usages, and on the sacred origin of their mission.”

“As much respect as thou wilt for rights that are sealed by time, for such is the stamp that gives value to my own fair claims ; and many of thy city privileges come chiefly of use. But the matter between us is of abuse ; and I hold it to be unworthy of those who can right themselves, to submit to wrong. Do the monks still press the town for dues ?”

“With offensive importunity. If matters be not quickly stayed, we shall come to open and indecent dissension.”

“I would give a winter’s enjoyment of my chases, were Friedrich more sorely pressed !” exclaimed the Count, laying his hand again on the Burgomaster’s knee, whose coun-

tenance he studied with a significance that was not lost on his companion. "I speak merely in the manner of his being driven to know his true and fast friends from those who are false."

Heinrich Frey remained silent.

"The Elector is a mild and loving prince, but one sorely ridden by Rome! I fear we shall never have a tranquil neighborhood, notwithstanding our long forbearance, until the Church is persuaded to limit its authority to its duties."

The eyelids of the Burgomaster lowered, as it might be in reflection.

"And chiefly, Heinrich, am I troubled lest my good and loving Duerckheimers lose this occasion to do themselves right," continued the Count, squeezing the knee he still grasped, until even the compact citizen flinched with the force of the pressure. "What say they in the council-hall touching this matter?"

There was no longer any plausible apology for the silence of the Burgomaster, who did not answer, however, without working the heavy muscles of his face, as if delivered of his opinions with pain.

"Men speak their minds among us, noble-born Count, much as Duke Friedrich prospers or fails, in his warfare. When we hear good tidings from the other side of the river, the brotherhood fares but badly in our discourses; but when the Elector's warriors triumph, we hold it prudent to remember they have friends."

"God's truth! Herr Heinrich, it is full time that you come to certain conclusions, else shall we be saddled to the end of our days by these hard-riding priests! Art thou not wearied with all their greedy exactions, that thou waitest patiently for more?"

"In that particular, a little sufficeth for our humors. There is not a city between Constance and Leyden, that is more quickly satisfied with paying than our Duerckheim; but we are husbands and fathers, Herr Count, and men that bear a heavy burthen of authority; and we must be wary, lest in throwing aside one portion of the load, space be found on our shoulders to place another that is heavier. When I would speak of your strong love to the town, there are distrustful tongues, that question me sorely of its fruits, and of your own honorable intentions in our behalf."

"To all of which thou couldest not be wanting of replies! Have I not often entertained thee with my loving wishes in behalf of the citizens?"

"If wishes in our behalf could serve our interests, the townsmen might, in their proper right, put in a claim to high favor. In the way of longing for our own success, Antwerp itself is not our better."

"Nay, thou takest my meaning unkindly; what Emich of Hartenburg wishes for his friends, he finds means to perform. But we will not trouble digestion, as we are about to feed, with these tiresome details——"

"I pray you, Herr Count, not to doubt my means—little troubles me, when——"

"Thou shalt yield to my humor. What! is not the Count of Leiningen master in his own castle. Not a word more will I hear till thou hast tasted of my poor hospitality. Did my knaves serve thee, as I commanded yesterday, with the fat buck that fell by my own hand, Heinrich?"

"A thousand thanks, mein Herr—they did, and right cheerfully. I gave the rogues a silver penny for their largess; and the dust of the Jaegerthal was washed away in heavy draughts of our wine of the plain."

"I would have it so; between friends, there should be no niggardly reserve, in the way of courtesies," said Emich, rising. "Dost not bethink thee, Burgomaster, of looking among the youths of Duerckheim for a son to stay thy age? Meta hath reached the years when maidens gladly become wives."

"The wench is not ignorant of her time of life, and the search of a suitable husband hath not failed to give me fatherly concern. I do not presume to compare our conditions and early lives in aught that is disrespectful, mein Herr Graf; but, touching all that is common to great and little, the youth of this day seem not as they were in the time of our young manhood."

"Priest-ridden, Burgomaster; too much of Rome in our laws and habits. God's my life! when I first mounted steed, in the court below, I could have leaped the convent towers, did a Benedictine dare gainsay the feat!"

"That would have been a miracle little short of the raising of their convent walls," answered Heinrich, laughing at his companion's flight, and rising in deference to the attitude the noble had been pleased to take. "These Bene-

dictines have been careless of their advantages, else might they still have kept the circumstance of that miracle as much beyond dispute, as it was in our young days, Lord Count."

"And what say they in Duerckheim, now, touching the affair?"

"Nay, men treat it, at present, as they treat other disreputable subjects. Since this outcry of Brother Luther, there have appeared many who call in question not only that, but divers others of the Abbey's feats."

The Count unconsciously crossed himself, seeming to ponder gloomily on the subject, within his own mind. Then glancing towards his companion, he perceived that he was standing.

"I cry thy mercy, worthy Burgomaster; but my inattention hath given thee this pain. My leg hath been so much of late suspended in the stirrup, that it hath need of straightening; but it should not, in justice, cause thee this inconvenience. I pray thee, Herr Frey, be seated."

"That would ill become my station in your presence, noble and well-born Emich; nor would it do fit credit to my reverence and affection."

"Nay, I will hear none of this. Thy seat, Master Heinrich, and that without delay; lest I seem to overlook thy merits."

"I pray mein Herr Graf not to do himself this wrong; nay, if it be your honorable will—I blush at mine own daring—if I consent, I call my lord to witness 'tis only in profound respect for his will!"

During this struggle of courtesy, the Count succeeded, by means of gentle violence, in forcing the Burgomaster to resume his seat. Heinrich had yielded with a species of maiden coyness; but when he found that, instead of occupying his own humble stool, he had unwittingly been forced into the arm-chair of the noble, he rebounded from the cushion, as if the leather contained enough of the electric fluid to bid defiance to the nonconductor qualities of the ample woollen garment in which his nether person was cased.

"Gott bewahre!" exclaimed the Burgomaster, in harsh, energetic German: "The empire would cry out against this scandal, were it known! I owe it to my reputation to deny myself an honor so little deserved."

“And I to my authority to enforce my will, and to proclaim thy deserts.”

Here the amiable force on the part of the Count, and the courteous coquetry of Heinrich Frey, were resumed, until the latter, fearful of offending by longer resistance, was obliged to submit, protesting, however, to the last, against the apparent presumption on his own part, and against the great injustice which the lord of the hold was doing to his own rights, by thus insisting.

A distinguished foreign orator once pronounced the titles of honor, and the social distinctions that are conferred by the European governments, to be the “cheap defence of nations.” This opinion strikes us to be merely one of the thousand bold fallacies that have been broached to uphold existing interests, without reference to their true effects, or to their inherent justice. This “cheap defence,” like the immortal Falstaff, who was not only witty himself, but the cause of wit in others, is the origin of a hundred sufficiently costly habits, that leave him who bears the burden but little reason to exult in its discovery. We recommend to all one-eyed economists, who still retain any faith in this well-known opinion of the English orator, to read that letter in the *Spectator*, in which a city youth relates the manner he is driven to vindicate his own reserve to his fair country cousins, who would fain reproach him with an ungraceful disrespect of his holiday privileges, by reminding them of the calculations of the individual who refused to indulge in cheese-cakes, because they brought with them so many other unnecessary expenditures.

But whether honors of the description just alluded to, do or do not form any portion of the economy of a nation, there is little question but flattery, like this which Emich has just bestowed on the Burgomaster, is one of the subtle and most powerful agents of the great in effecting their secret purposes. Few are they—alas, how few!—that possess a vision sufficiently clear, and an ambition so truly noble, as to look beyond the narrow and vulgar barriers of human selfishness, and to regard truth as it came from God, without respect for persons and things, except as they are the instruments of his will. It is certain that Heinrich Frey had little pretension to be one of this scrutinizing and elevated class; for when he found himself fairly seated in the chair of the Count of Hartenburg, with

the noble himself standing, his sensations were like those which are felt by the philosopher of the other hemisphere, who is authorized to put a ribbon at his button-hole ;—or the tradesman of this, who is elected to the common-council of his native city, after being run on both tickets. Still he greatly regretted there was no one to envy his preferment ; for, after the first soothing effect on his own self-love, that unquiet spirit which haunts us to the last, disfiguring the fairest pictures, and casting its alloy into every scheme of happiness, suggested that his triumph would be imperfect without a witness. Just as this rebellious feeling became troublesome, there appeared at the door of the closet, the very being of all others that the Burgomaster would have chosen to see him in the enjoyment of this high honor. A gentle tap announced the presence of the intruder, and when the authoritative voice of Emich had given the permission, the mild Ulrike appeared on the threshold.

Surprise was strongly painted on the features of the Burgomaster's wife. The husband had crossed his legs, and was indulging in his ease, with a sort of noble indifference to the unusual situation in which he was placed, when this extraordinary sight greeted the eyes of his amazed consort. So absolute and so tenacious were the rules of Germany on all things that concerned the respect due to rank, that even one as little troubled by ambition as the meek Ulrike, had great difficulty in believing her senses when she beheld Heinrich Frey thus suddenly elevated to a seat of honor in the presence of a Count of Leiningen.

“Nay, enter without fear, my good Ulrike,” said Emich, graciously ; “thy worthy husband and I do but indulge in mutual friendship, while my varlets prepare an unworthy banquet. Do not think to break our discourse.”

“I only hesitate, noble Emich, at seeing Heinrich Frey preferred to that seat, while the Lord of Hartenburg stands, like one of humble birth, at his side !”

“Touch not the matter, meine Frau,” said the husband, condescendingly. “Thou art a loving consort, and art well enough amid thy sex, and in questions that belong to thy breeding ; but in an affair, like this, between mein Herr Graf and me, thou mayst only mar what thou canst not mend.”

“By the life of the princely Karl ! master Heinrich, you

do insufficient justice to Ulrike's discernment! Were mine own Ermengarde among us, thou shouldst see that we prize thy loving wife little less than we esteem thee. But it were better that we inquire of Ulrike the occasion of her visit, before we attempt to school her on matters of deportment."

Though so rough and unnurtured on many of the points that are now deemed essential even to an indifferent civilization, Emich had a quick interest for the perception of character, and possessed as much of the refinement that marks a superior condition in life as the state of the age and the situation of his own country permitted. There can be no greater mistake than to imagine that mere nominal rank is any pledge for a correspondent degree of refinement, since everything is relative in this world, and where the base of the pillar is rude and little polished, it would be a violation of all architectural keeping to expect a capital of a different style. Thus it is that we, without any social orders but those of convention, are struck with so many glaring discrepancies among people whose patricians, having studied all that is factitious and plausible in breeding, are still deficient in the grand essentials of reason and humanity, simply because the roots of the society, of which they are only the more luxuriant branches, are planted in the soil of ignorance and debasement. The Count of Hartenburg had possessed ample opportunities of witnessing how much the intellectual qualities of the Burgomaster's wife were superior to those of her husband; and he had sufficient discrimination and experience to be quite aware of the importance of conciliating such an ally in advancing his own particular views. It was in this spirit, therefore, that he ventured on so blunt a reproof of Heinrich's superciliousness, and volunteered the compliment to the spouse; probably hazarding the latter, from an intimate conviction that most husbands are content to hear eulogies on those who are so completely in their power as their own wives.

"Since it is your honorable pleasure, Herr Count, for God's sake let the woman come in," answered Heinrich, still, however, without changing an attitude so soothing to his self-esteem. "If she should see me seated in a presence in which it would much better become me to kneel, why it may help to show that God hath given her a companion that is not altogether without the world's esteem,

little as he may merit it. Enter freely, therefore, good Ulrike, since it is my lord's pleasure ; but presume not on his condescension to me, which is rather a mark of great love for our town, than any matter connected with domestic life."

"In all that the high-born Count hath done honor to any of us, whether as of Duerckheim, or as his unworthy neighbors, I desire respectfully to be grateful," returned the wife, who, by this time had recovered from her surprise, and who now advanced farther into the narrow room, with the modest self-possession which ordinarily distinguished her manner :—"If I do not come amiss, I crave to be heard of both, in a matter that toucheth nearly a mother's heart ; and a matter, as it is of Heinrich Frey's child I would fain speak, that I trust may not be indifferent to my lord the Count."

"Were it of mine own little Kunigunde, the subject should not be more welcome !" said the noble. "Speak freely then, gentle Ulrike, and with the same simplicity thou wouldest use were it only to thy husband's ear."

"Thou hearest, woman ! mein Herr Graf enters, as it were, into all our tribulations and happiness, an' he were no other than a brother. So mince not the matter, but deal frankly with us ; though I admonish thee not to push thy words to all the familiarity of household discourse."

"As it is of a subject so near, I pray leave to close the door, before more is uttered."

The words of Ulrike were cut short by a hasty gesture of approbation from her husband, and by the Count himself, who, with more of the consideration and manner of a gentleman, performed the desired office with his own hands, thus admitting the wife, as it were, into the very cabinet of their secret councils.

CHAPTER XII.

"You would be another Penelope : yet they
Say, all the yarn she spun, in Ulysses' absence, did
But fill Ithaca full of moths."—*Coriolanus*.

WHEN Ulrike found himself fairly closeted with the Count and her husband, and was quietly seated on the stool which the former, spite of the latter's protestations

to the contrary, had insisted on her taking, she cast her mild eyes about her, with that expression and touching appeal that a woman is apt to make when she feels called on to act as the adviser, if not the guardian, of him whom nature intended and the law presumes, is both able and willing to discharge those offices for her. Notwithstanding Henrich's obstinacy and masculine swaggering, many occasions had arrived in the course of their matrimonial life to produce a latent conviction in both, that the order of things was a little inverted, as respects judgment and moral authority, by inclining one to lean, though with but an indifferent grace, where he should have supported; and tempting the other, at times, to overstep her sex's duties, though it was always done with an intuitive perception of her sex's seemliness and means.

"For this condescension I thank my Lord Emich, and thee, Heinrich," commenced the thoughtful matron; "for it is not at all times advisable for the wife to intrude unbidden even to her husband's presence."

A significant ejaculation, which might almost merit a coarser term, was the manner in which the Burgomaster expressed his assent, during the brief pause that succeeded this excuse of Ulrike. The more courteous host bowed with sufficient respect, though even by his manner it was evident he was getting impatient to know the real motive of the interruption.

"We are too well pleased to receive thee, to remember the usages and rights of manhood," answered the latter, with a kindness of manner that was insensibly extorted by the winning and feminine qualities of her he addressed, and which in some degree softened the pretensions of his language—"Proceed with thy matter, for none can be more ready to listen."

"Thou hearest, good Ulrike! the Herr Count is willing to remember thou art a Burgomaster's consort; and, as he is pleased to say, we are truly impatient to be let into the cause of thy sudden visit."

The thoughtful Ulrike received this encouragement like one accustomed to be treated, in some measure, as a being inferior in capacity and force to her husband, but not without a shade like that which is produced by unmerited humiliation. Smiling—and few, even in early and attractive youth, and so sweet an expression, when her countenance thus gleamed, whether it were in pleasure, or in

melancholy—smiling, as it might be, partly in female gentleness, and partly in sadness, she commenced the purport of her visit, coming, however, to her true object with great reserve and with the caution of a woman accustomed to influence, rather than to control.

“For the great kindness and condescension of the Herr Emich, in behalf of Heinrich Frey, and of all that are his, no one is more grateful than I,” she said; “if I may now seem to trouble him with the concerns of a family—on which he has already so freely lavished favors——”

“And friendship, good Ulrike.”

“And friendship, since you permit me, noble Count, to use the word—but, if I now seem to trespass beyond breeding, by troubling your mind with a concern that is so remote from your own interests, I trust you will remember a mother’s tenderness, and think of the high-born Ermen-garde whose anxiety for her own offspring may furnish some excuse for that I feel for mine.”

“Hath aught befell the blooming Meta?”

“God’s my life!” exclaimed the troubled Heinrich, abandoning his much-prized seat, in the suddenness of paternal alarm. “Hath the wench suffered from the over-rich eels of the Rhine? or is she massed to death by these accursed monks?”

“Our child is well in the body, and, the blessed Maria be praised! she is pure and innocent in mind,” returned Ulrike. “I have little cause for aught but gratitude in either of these behalves;—but, she is of an age when girlish fancies become unsettled, and the flexible female spirit seeks impressions from others than those whom nature hath made its guardians.”

“This is some of thy usual incomprehensibilities, good woman, and language that is not easily understood by any but thyself. The noble Graf hath no leisure to hunt up new ideas to maintain a discourse in subtleties. Had the girl indeed tasted too freely of the rare dish which the honest Burgomaster of Manheim so kindly sent me, as I at first feared, no doubt the means to cure might be found in Hartenburg; but thou askest too much, wife of mine, when thou wouldest have any but thine own husband enter into all the cunning niceties that sometimes beset thy imagination.”

“Nay, Master Heinrich, here may be more urgent matter than thou thinkest: thy dame is not a woman whose

opinions are to be neglected. Wilt proceed with thy recital, good Ulrike?"

"Our child is at that period of life," continued the mother, too much accustomed to the manner of her husband to permit it to divert her thoughts from their main intention—"when the young of every sort begin to think of the future. It is a principle that God hath implanted, Herr Emich, and therefore it is for good; and we, who have watched over the infancy of our offspring with so much anxiety, have trained their youth with so much care, and have so often trembled for their noon-time, must, sooner or later, consent to loosen the sweet ties that bind us to our second selves, in order that the great ends of the creation shall be accomplished."

"Umph!" ejaculated Heinrich.

"Nay, gentle Ulrike," said the Count, "maternal love hath drawn this picture in stronger colors than may be necessary. When the time for matrimony comes, God's my life! daughter of thine and honest Heinrich Frey, need not wear maiden's coif a day longer than is necessary to do suitable reverence to the Church. Here have I youths, out of number, that look to the house of Leiningen for grace, any one of whom would be glad to wive with the damsel I should name. There is young Friedrich Zant-zinger, the orphan of my last deputy in the villages of the plain; he is a lad that would gladly do harder service to gain my love."

"When old Friedrich left the boy fatherless, he left him without a penny," dryly rejoined the Burgomaster.

"That is a fault which might be mended; but I have others that can be named. What thinkest thou of the eldest son of my Heidelberg attorney, worthy Conrad Walther?"

"Curse the knave? I hate him from my heart."

"Thou art warm, Master Heinrich, against one that I both trust and favor."

"I cry your mercy, Herr Graf; but a sudden rising of the bile, at the mention of the fellow's name, got the better of respect," answered the Burgomaster, with more moderation, who, as he saw by the lowering look of Emich's brow the necessity of explanation, continued, with rather more openness than he might have thought necessary under circumstances of less urgency: "Perhaps the high-born Count was never possessed of the matter of our late controversy?"

“Nay, I pretend not to judge my friends——”

“Let but my lord condescend to hear me, and I leave him arbiter between us. It is well known to you, Herr Emich, that collections were made, and charity asked, in behalf of the peasants who suffered, the past year, from the sudden rising of the Rhine. Among others, the good Christians of our town were importuned for succor ; and, for none will deny that it was a sad visitation of Providence, we gave freely as became our several means. To prevent improper uses of the money, in all cases of liberal donations the sealed bond of the donor, at a near day, was asked in preference to the silver ; and mine was granted for the fair sum of twelve crowns, as a poor donation suited to my hopes and station. It so fell out, Herr Graf, that those charged with the distribution had occasion for their money before the instruments were up ; and they sent agents among us, in order to enter into such negotiations as the cases might need. Gold was scarce at the moment ; and because, in regaining my bond, I had a heedful regard to mine own interests, the misdealing Conrad would fain transport me, like a thief, before the authorities of Heidelberg, to undergo the penalties of a usurer. Son of his shall never call me father, with your gracious leave, nobly-born Count of Leiningen !”

“This truly offereth some impediment to the affair ; but, failing of young Conrad, I have others that may be accounted worthy of this advantage. So put thy maternal heart at ease, good Ulrike, and trust to my active friendship to dispose of the girl.”

The Burgomaster's consort had been a patient listener during the short but characteristic digression of her husband. Trained in the opinions of the times, she did not possibly endure all that a mother and a wife, of equal native sensibility, might now suffer at so evident a debasement of her sex ; but as the laws of nature are permanent, neither did she escape a pang of wounded feeling as she heard the different expedients that were so hastily devised for the future disposal of one who formed her chief happiness in life. There was less of that hectic color, which commonly gave a lustre to eyes that were by nature rather melancholy than bright, and her voice was fuller of emotion than before, as she continued.

“For all this heed of me and mine, I again thank the Herr Count ; but there is a power that is stronger with

the young than the counsel of the experienced, or even than the wishes of their friends," she said. "My intent, in intruding myself unbidden into this secret conference, was to say that Meta had listened to the voice of her sympathies more than to the usages of her class, and chosen for herself."

The Count and Heinrich Frey stared at the speaker in mute surprise, for neither fully comprehended her meaning; while Ulrike herself, one of her objects being accomplished, in having made this long-dreaded declaration in the presence of a person able to repress the anger of her husband, sat silent, inwardly trembling for the consequences.

"Wilt thou explain the meaning of thy worthy consort, Herr Heinrich," abruptly asked the Count.

"Zum Henker! you ask me to perform an office, Lord Count, that might better fit a Benedictine, or a clerk. When Ulrike, who is an excellent and obedient companion in the main, once gets upon the stilts of fancy, I never pretend to be able to raise an idea to the level of her shoe-buckle. Go to! thou hast well spoken, wife of mine; and it will now be better to seek our child, lest yonder cavalier of Rhodes be oiling her ears with the unction of flattery."

"Nay, by my house's honors! but I will know more of this matter, thy fair and virtuous consort consenting, Master Heinrich. Wilt explain thyself freely, dame?"

Whether it be from the instinct of weakness and delicacy, or only the fruit of precepts constantly inculcated, a virtuous woman rarely admits the existence of the sentiment of love, either in herself or in any that is dear to her, without a feeling of shame, and possibly not without an intuitive knowledge that she is conceding some of the vantage-ground of her sex's privileges.

This feeling was apparent in Ulrike, by the slow but complete suffusion of her cheek, and by the manner in which her looks avoided those of Emich, spite of the self-possession and calm of her years.

"I would merely say, Herr Emich," she replied, "that Meta, like all who are young and innocent, hath fancied an image of perfection, and that she hath found an original for her picture in a youth of the Jaegerthal. While of this mind she cannot, in honesty or in maidenly respect, become the bride of any other than him she loves."

"The affair grows clearer," returned the count, smiling

like one who took no very deep interest in the matter; "and it is as well explained as heart could wish—at least, heart of the youth in question. What thinkest thou of this, Herr Burgomaster?"

The comprehension of Heinrich Frey could not altogether misconceive so plain an explanation, and, since the moment when his wife had ceased speaking, he sat regarding her mild but troubled countenance, with parted lips and open eyes, like a man that first learns some unlooked-for intelligence of great moment.

"Herr Teufel!" exclaimed Heinrich, taking up the last words of the Baron, unconscious of the disrespect of what he did—"Art talking of our own natural-born child?"

"Of none other. In whom else have I this motherly affection?—or for what other can I feel this deep concern?"

"Dost mean that Meta—my daughter, Meta Frey—hath inclination for son of woman, except it may be the natural love and reverence she beareth her own father?—that the girl hath truant and free fancies?"

"I say nothing to give this opinion of Meta—my daughter, Meta," returned Ulrike, with womanly dignity. "Our child has done no more than listened to the secret whisperings of nature; and, in yielding her affections to a youth whom she hath often seen and long known, she hath merely paid an homage to merit, that the most virtuous are the most apt to yield."

"Go to, Ulrike! Thou art well enough among thy household, and a woman for whom I have esteem; but these visions with which thou art so often troubled, give thee an air, at times, of being of less discernment than thou mayest fairly claim to be. Excuse the dame, Herr Count; for, though her own husband, and a little weak on the subject of her infirmities perhaps, there is not a more thrifty manager, a more faithful spouse, or a kinder mother in the Palatinate."

"Nay, thou little need say this to me! None know the worth of Ulrike better; and, I may add, few respect her so much. It were well to hear further of this matter, Heinrich; for, to treat thee in candor, there may lay more beneath this opening of the excellent wife than is at first apparent. Our Meta hath seen the qualities of some worthy youth sooner than they have struck the eye of her quick-sighted father, thou wouldst say. Is it not so, dame?"

"I would say that the heart of my child is so closely bound in that of another, as to leave little hope of happiness should her matrimonial duties teach her to forget him."

"Thou thinkest, then, good dame, that the young fancies of a female, when once indulged, are not to be removed by the offices of wife and mother?—that a caprice of the imagination is stronger than a vow made at the altar?"

Though the eyes of both the Count and the Burgomaster were riveted on the fine and speaking countenance of Ulrike, the volume of eloquent nature, that was thus opened to their observation, proved little better than a blank. Strong and dramatic exhibitions of feeling require but little interpretation for the dullest faculties; but few indeed are they who are capable of comprehending the secret workings of a spirit chastened and restrained as that of a virtuous, but unhappily-paired woman. There is, perhaps, no one aspect of human nature more commonplace, or more easily understood, than that which is hourly offered by a worldly-minded and capricious fair. She runs her little career, seemingly as erratic as a comet, though, in truth, her course is always to be calculated on the infallible principles of vanity and selfishness; but no secret is more hermetically sealed against impertinent and vulgar curiosity, than the elevated sentiments which sustain the suffering and silent female who is truly instinct with the high qualities of her sex.

We are no railer at the domination of man; for we are persuaded that he who would wish to transform the being that was created to be his solacer and companion—his guide in moral darkness, and his sharer in sorrow as in joy—into a worldly competitor, changing love and confidence to rivalry and contention, is but miserably instructed in that sublime ordinance of nature, which has thus separated the highest order of its creation into two great classes, so replete with mutual consolation and happiness.

Had the wife of the Burgomaster arisen, and, in chosen terms, made an appeal to the sympathies of her companions, in which language should unite with manner to produce an effect, she might have been understood, as the every-day reader understands all such pictures of female character; but where she sat, silent, suffering, and meek, she was completely concealed from any means of compre-

hension possessed by either. Her eye did not kindle, for long and patient subordination had taught her to submit to the misconstructions of her husband ; nor scarcely did the faint color of her cheek deepen, since the load at her heart counteracted the natural impulses of pride and resentment.

"I think, Lord Count, that when an innocent and youthful female heart yields to a power that nature perhaps has made irresistible," she said, "it, at least, merits to be treated tenderly. Meta hath few fancies of the kind you mention ; and the attachment she feels, though doubtless deepened by those colors which the least experienced in the truths of life are the most apt to paint, is but the natural consequence of much association, and of great deserving on the part of the young man."

"This is getting to be plain, Herr Emich," said Heinrich Frey, pithily, "and must needs be looked to. Wilt condescend to name the youth thou meanest, Ulrike ?"

"Berchthold Hintermayer."

"Berchthold Teufelstein !" exclaimed the Burgomaster, laughing, though there was something like a secret consciousness of danger in the very manner in which he gave loose to his merriment. "A penniless boy is truly a fit husband for child of mine !"

The quiet, blue eye of Ulrike was fastened on her husband ; but she averted it with sensitive haste, lest it might betray that she was thinking of the time when her own father had consented to her marriage with one nearly as poor, merely because the penetration of the parent had discovered those qualities of prudence and gainful industry in his townsman which after-experience so fully developed.

"He is not rich, Heinrich," was her answer ; "but he is worthy ; and why need a chill be thrown on the heart of Meta, for the desire of that which she already hath in sufficient plenty ?"

"Hear you this, Herr Emich ? My wife is lifting the curtain of privacy before your respected eyes with a freedom for which I could fain cry mercy."

"Berchthold is a youth I love," gravely observed the Count.

"In that case, I shall say nothing disrespectful of the lad, who is a worthy forester, and in all things suited to his service in the family of Hartenburg ; still, he is but a

forester, and a very penniless one. I had not thought to dispose of the girl so soon, for a little maidenly leisure does none of the sex injury, Lord Count ; but as she hath her head set upon this Berchthold, it may be well to wrap it in a matron's coif, by way of filling it with ideas more suited to her hopes."

"The remedy may prove fatal, Heinrich!" mildly observed Ulrike, raising her tearful eye to the obstinate features of the Burgomaster.

"Nay, I ought to know the constitution of the family; what has so well succeeded with the mother cannot harm the child."

The wife did not reply. But Emich of Hartenburg had been deeply interested by her gentle and winning manner, for he had watched her countenance closely, and understood the womanly effort by which the appearance of calm was preserved. Turning to the Burgomaster, he laid a hand on his shoulder, with a friendly smile, and said—

"Herr Heinrich, thou hast a fair and gentle consort; but, I think, too, thou hast scarce less faith in me than in thy wife. Give us leave; I would fain reason this matter with Ulrike, without the aid of thy influence."

"A thousand thanks for the honor to me and mine, high-born Count! As to faith, I would leave the dame a year on Limburg-hill without other thought than for her convenience; for none know the worth of Ulrike better, though she is so difficult to comprehend when her fancy is moulting. Now kiss me, dame, and prithee do no dishonor to the Count's counsel."

Thus saying, Heinrich Frey placed a hearty kiss on the soft cheek that the obedient Ulrike freely offered, and left his wife alone with the noble, without other thought than of the high distinction that was conferred on his name. The manner in which he prized the notice of the Baron was sufficiently manifested by the readiness with which he communicated the circumstance that Emich and his consort were closeted on an affair touching the interests of the family of Frey, to all who would listen to his tale.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Ah me ! for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tales or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth !"

—SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN the door was closed on the husband, the Count turned to the wife, and continued the discourse.

"I love young Berchthold Hintermayer, good Ulrike," he said, "and would gladly be of aid in this affair, which, I see plainly, thou hast much at heart."

"The mother would be unnatural that had not anxiety for the happiness of her child. In youth, Lord Count, we gaze before us, filling the dim ascent with scenes drawn after our wishes, and peopling the world with the beings that we deem most necessary to our hopes ; but when we have reached the eminence, whence the commencement and the end of life can both be plainly seen, do we first find truth. I am as little disposed as another to venture rashly on a union that has no better security for its fruits than a blind and feverish passion, that will be certain to consume itself by its own fierceness ; but, on the other hand, none who have known life as I can be disposed to consider lightly those resemblances of taste and opinions, those gentle touches of character and disposition, that are most likely to conduce to wedded love."

"Thou art esteemed lucky in thine own consorting, dame?"

"God hath much blessed me in many mercies—the question is of Meta, my Lord Count."

Ulrike, spite of herself, had changed color ; but, aided by the manner of matronly reserve she immediately assumed, the little emotion passed with Emich as no more than a display of feminine reserve, that was intended to repress a curiosity he had no title to indulge.

"The question is of Meta, in sooth," he answered ; "and, by Saint Benedict ! the youth shall not want for friendly and free support. But favor should have favor's reward. If I give into thy humor in this concern of thy daughter's marriage, good Ulrike, in return, I expect of thee a service on which I scarce lay less stress."

The matron raised her eyes to the countenance of her companion, in surprise. One who had not so uniformly preserved her own self-respect, might have doubted of what she heard; but the look of the Burgomaster's wife merely conveyed a meaning of curiosity and innocence.

"You will deserve far more than I can bestow, Herr Count, should you do aught to secure the happiness of Meta."

"Fair wife," continued Emich, seating himself, and taking her hand, with the freedom which his superior rank and the usages of the country allowed, "thou knowest the manner in which these Benedictines have so long vexed our valley; and, being so deeply in the confidence of the honest Heinrich, thou must have suspected that, wearied of their insolence and exactions, we have seriously bethought us of the means by which to reduce them to the modesty that becometh their godly professions, and which might better justify their pretensions?"

Emich paused, and sat intently regarding the face of his quiet listener. He had unwittingly touched upon the very subject that had been the chief inducement with the Burgomaster's wife for intruding upon the privacy of the conspirators. She had long suspected their intentions; and, though she felt deep care for the future lot of Meta, and had gladly availed herself of a favorable occasion to break the ice on a subject that, sooner or later, must be disclosed, her real object was to warn Heinrich against the probable consequences of the plot. In this disposition, then, she heard the Count with secret pleasure, and prepared herself to reply, in the manner she had long meditated.

"All that you say, Herr Count," she answered, "has more than once crossed my mind; and deeply have I grieved that those I so love and honor should thus meditate injury to the altars of God—plan desperate devices to interrupt his praise."

"How! dost thou call the whinings of these knaves praise of aught but their own hypocrisy?" interrupted Emich. "Are they not the instigators of most of our sins, by their example?—the parents of all the contention that troubles the neighborhood?—Consider, good Ulrike, that heaven is not a close into which souls are to be driven blindfolded; but that we, who are of the flock, have at least the right, as we have the means, of judging whether the shepherds are fit for their office, or not."

"And should they prove unequal to, or unworthy of their duties, where do we find authority to do them harm?"

"God's my life ! good wife ; are our swords nothing ? Are a noble name, an ancient and high descent, a long-standing claim to command, and a stout heart, nothing ?"

"Arrayed against the Almighty, they count as the leaves of your own forest when fluttering in a gale ;—less than the flakes of snow that drive, in winter, against the battlements of your strong castle. Limburg is reared in honor of God ; and he that raiseth a hand against the sacred walls, will be apt to repent the rashness in woe. If there are unworthy ministers at its altars, there are also those that are worthy ; and were it not so, the mission is too high to be sullied by any frailty of those who abuse their trusts."

The Count was disturbed ; for Ulrike spoke earnestly, and in a voice of sweet persuasion. He leaned his chin upon a hand, as a man that pondered well upon the hazards of his enterprise.

"What thinkest thou, Ulrike, of this brother of Wittenberg ?" he at length asked. "Could we but fairly make him out honest and wise, ecclesiastical authority for lowering the pride of Limburg might be had !"

"I am one of those who think brother Luther honest ; I am also one of those who think him mistaken : but even he is far from urging to deeds of violence."

"By Saint Benedict ! woman, thou hast had converse with Father Arnolph, touching this question. Echo does not answer sound more faithfully than thou repeatest the sentiments of the Prior."

"It is not strange that they who love God should feel and speak alike in a matter affecting his honor. I have said nought to Father Arnolph, nor to any other of the Abbey, of your designs ; for it is not easy for Ulrike Frey to forget she is both wife and mother. But I have prayed often, that the hearts of those who contemplate this dangerous sacrilege may be softened ; and that, for their own safety, they may yet see the evil of their plot. Believe me, Count, the Dread Being who is worshipped in Limburg, will not forget to avenge himself of those who despise his power !"

"Thou art certain, Ulrike, that thy opinions have weight with me, for since childhood have I known and respected thy wisdom. Nay, had there not been want of those claims which birth can alone give, thou wouldst now be sitting

in this castle its mistress, and not a guest. The self-denial which was practised, in order to do my father pleasure cost me much pain for many years ; nor did I rightly regain my freedom, until the birth of my eldest born turned my hopes towards posterity."

It is seldom woman hears the acknowledgment of her influence with the stronger sex, without secret satisfaction. As there had been nothing in the attachment to which the Count alluded, to alarm her principles or to offend her delicacy, Ulrike listened to this reference to the feeling and incidents of their younger days, with a smile that produced an effect on her gentle features, which resembled the melancholy light which illuminated the chapel of the religious community in question ; or which was mild, placid, and, if we may be permitted an expression so vague, tinged with hues of the past.

"We are no longer young, Emich," she answered, withdrawing her hand, under a keen impulse of its propriety—"and that which thou speakest belongs to a former age. But if thou dost, in sooth, entertain this opinion of my discretion, I have never said aught of thee but in thy honor. There were other reasons than the late Count's will, why I could not listen to thy suit, as thou wert then informed ; for we are none of us the controllers of those sentiments which so much depend on taste or accident."

"By the sainted eleven thousand of Koeln ! Heinrich Frey was scarce a youth to do this disadvantage to the heir of my line and name !"

"Heinrich Frey received my troth, as the noble Ermengarde received thine, Herr von Hartenburg," answered Ulrike, with the composure of one whose feelings had never been interested in the refusal to which she alluded, and with the dignity of a woman sensitively alive to her husband's character. "By Heaven's favor, we are both happier than if wedded either above or beneath our hopes. But if thou couldst deny thyself this boon—for such, in thy young fancies, didst thou believe my hand—to oblige thy father of earth, wilt thou still defy him of Heaven, to gratify a longing less excusable ?"

"Go to, Ulrike ; thou pressest me out of reason ; I know not fairly that I even meditate the enterprise thou meanest."

"Or, in other language, thou art not yet decided to commit the sacrilege. Before thy hand strikes the irre-

trievable blow, Herr Count, hear one that, in thy youth, thou professed to love, and who yet remembers thy preference, with grateful kindness."

"Thou art more indulgent as a matron than as a maid! This is the first word of pity for all the sorrow thou causedst my youth, that hath ever escaped thee!"

"Pity is a term it would ill become Ulrike Haitzinger to use to Emich von Leiningen. I said, gratitude, Herr Count; for the woman that pretendeth not to feel this sentiment towards the honorable youth that has preferred her to all others of her sex, payeth an indifferent compliment to her own heart. I never disavowed that thy suit gave me both gratification and sorrow—gratification, that one of thy hopes could find sufficient in me to justify thy choice; sorrow, that thou wert necessarily disappointed."

"And had our births been nearer an equality, gentle Ulrike, hadst thou, like me, come of noble parentage, or I like thee, been of more humble origin, couldst thou, in sooth, have found in thy heart, the excuse for a different answer?"

"We are here to discuss other matters, Herr von Hartenburg, than these recollections of childish feelings."

"God's my life! Callest thou the pain of disappointed affection a childish sorrow? Thou wert ever tranquil in temper, and too much disposed to indifference on the subject of any warmth of heart beyond the cold duties of family regard."

"This may be my fault, if you will, Count Emich, but I esteem it an advantage to feel strongest where duty most directs the affections."

"I remember thy final answer, made through thy friend young Berchthold's mother—I owe the lad no grace for the boon, were justice done—but thou answered, that the daughter of a Burgomaster was unfit to be the partner of a Baron; and thou prayedst me to render all duty to the Count my father, that his blessing might lighten the disappointment. Now, were the truth known, that reply cost thee no more than a simple refusal to one of thy maidens of some trifling grace!"

"Were the truth known, Emich, it would tell a different tale. Thou wert then young, and, though violent and hot-headed, not without many manly virtues; and thou greatly overratest the power of a thoughtful girl, if thou supposest

she would gladly give pain, where she has received naught but esteem."

"And had I been thy neighbor's child—or wert thou the daughter of some equal of the empire?—"

"In that case, Lord Count, the answer would have been the same," said the other, firmly, though her countenance evidently lost its tranquil brightness in a transient cloud: "The heart of Ulrike Haitzinger spoke in that reply, as well as her prudence."

"God's truth! thou art of cutting simplicity!" cried the Count, rising abruptly, and losing the expression of gentleness that the recollection of his better days and youthful feelings had given his features, in their usual hardened character. "Thou forgettest, Frau Frey, that I am a poor Count of Leiningen!"

"If I have failed in meet respect," returned the mild Ulrike, "I am now reminded of the fault, and will sin no more."

"Nay, I would say naught unkind or ungentle—but thou bruised my spirit, with a sore answer. We were conversing of the accursed monks, too, and blood gets hot at the mention of their names. Thou thinkest, then, my excellent neighbor, that, as Christians, we are bound to submit to all the exactions of these reverend knaves, and that to presume to right ourselves, is flying in the face of Heaven's authority?"

"You put the case in your own humor, Count. I have said naught of abject forbearance, or of unnecessary submission. If the Limburg monks are forgetful of their vows, the question is of their own safety:—as for us, we have to look that we do nothing wrongful of itself, or nothing that may be accounted disrespectful to Him we worship"—

"Prithee, good Ulrike," interrupted Emich, resuming his seat, in the familiar manner he had used at the commencement of the dialogue, "let us converse, in freedom, of this inclination of thy child. I love young Berchthold, and would fain do him service were the means offering; but I greatly fear we shall have difficulty in bringing Heinrich to a complying state of mind."

"The apprehension of his refusal hath caused me much uneasiness, Herr von Hartenburg," returned the tender mother; "for the Burgomaster is not one of those who change their opinions readily. The over-zealous persua-

sion of friends increases his faith in himself, at times, instead of softening those resolutions which the wisest of us are apt to form hastily and without thought."

"This quality of thy excellent consort hath not escaped me. But Heinrich Frey was wived so happily himself, and with so little claim to riches on his own part, that he should not, in reason, bear too heavily on a youth that might have known better days, but for a hard fortune befalling his parents. He that hath been poor, should have respect for poverty in others."

"I fear that such is not the working of human nature," answered the thoughtful wife, nearly unconscious of what she uttered. "Our experience in life would prove that they who have risen show the least tolerance for those who tarry in the rear; and, as none prize the gifts of rank and consequence so much as they to whom they are novelties, we ought not to expect the successful man too soon to forget the longings he felt when in adversity, nor him to whom honors are new, to look too closely into their vanity."

"Nay, Heinrich is not so young in consideration, or so new to fortune, as to be classed with these."

"Heinrich!" exclaimed the matron, across whose chaste brow there stole a crimson suffusion, that resembled the flush of even upon the snowy peaks of the Alps—"There is not question, here, of Heinrich Frey!"

The Count smiled till the mustachios curled upon his brown cheeks.

"Thou art right," he answered courteously; "it is in Berchthold and Meta that we are most interested. I think I see the means of accomplishing all we wish in their behalf, and means that offer so readily as to wear the air of being a gift of Providence."

"They are only the more welcome for their character."

"Thou knowest, Ulrike, that I am greatly burthened with charges that lay heavily on all of my rank. Ermen-garde hath most of the qualities of her station, and a love of splendor that is costly; besides, this outfit of my young heir, who travels with the Emperor, hath much drained me of means, of late; else would I offer, of pure love for thee and thine that which would make the connection acceptable to Heinrich. In this strait, borne down, as we all are by the war, and saddled with the cost of keeping on foot so many men in Hartenburg, I see no other present means than that I have just mentioned."

“Or have not mentioned; for, in the desire to prove your inability to serve the youth, nothing hath yet been said of this favorable chance offered by Providence.”

“I cry thy mercy! Thou hast rightly judged me, Ulrike, for I feel it a reproach to be able to do nothing for one I so esteem.”

“Put no undue meaning on my words,” interrupted the matron, smiling like one who wished to reassure her companion. “It has never entered my thoughts that the Counts of Leiningen are bound to portion all who serve them, according to their several hopes. It would lighten the heaviest purse in the Palatinate, Herr Emich, to furnish an equal marriage-gift to that which may be the share of Meta Frey.”

“None know this better than I. Heinrich and I have often discoursed of the affair, and I could fain wish there existed no inequality of rank—but this is idle, and we will talk only of Berchthold and his hopes. Thou are aware, Ulrike, that there are heavy issues between me and the brotherhood concerning certain dues, not only in the valley, but on the plain, and that the contest fairly settled in my favor will much increase my revenues. Now were this unhappy dissension decided as I could wish, it would not only be in my power, but it would become my wish, to bestow such grace on all my principal followers, and on none so much as on Berchthold, as might leave a favorable opinion of my bounty. We want but this affair rightly settled to possess the means of winning Heinrich to our desires.”

“Could this be honestly done, my blessing on him that shall effect it!”

“I rejoice to hear thee say this, good Ulrike. Thou, of all others, mayest be most useful in the matter. Heinrich and I have well nigh decided on the fitness of disturbing the monks in their riotous abominations——”

“The words are strong, when applied to professed Benedictines!”

“By the holy Magi! they are more than merited. Here, has not the day twice turned since I had Bonifacius himself weltering in wine beneath the roof of Hartenburg, an’ he had been a roisterer of a suburb! Bonifacius, Limburg’s Abbot, have I seen in this unfit condition, Frau Ulrike, within mine own good castle walls!”

“And in thine own good castle company, Herr Emich?”

“Dost thou make no difference between Baron and

Monk? Am I a sworn professor of godliness, a shaven crown, or one that looketh to be accounted better than his fellows? That I am noble is the chance of fortune, and as such I receive and profit by the advantage, though, I trust, always in fitting reason; but no man can say that Emich of Leiningen pretends ought to the especial virtues of a monkish character. We that are modest may claim to indulge our failings, but justice should heavily visit him that sins under a cloak of sanctity."

"I know not that thy exception may avail thee in the end. But thou wouldest say something to Berchthold Hintermayer's advantage?—"

"That would I, and right heartily. Could Heinrich be brought to a firm mind, that I might count on the support of the townsmen, these reprobates in cowls should be quickly disposed of; and, as of necessity, my dues would be much augmented, by clothing Berchthold with a deputy's authority over the recovered fields and villages, he should so gain in men's respect, as to soften the reluctance of the hardest-hearted Burgomaster in all Germany."

"And in what manner dost thou look to me in effecting this object?"

"One of thy understanding need scarce put the question. Thou hast been long a wife, Ulr'ke, and art skilled in the persuasions of thy sex. I know not thy practice with Heinrich; but when Ermengarde would have her way, spite of her husband's inclinations, she has various manners of coming to her wishes. To-day she is smiling, to-morrow silent; now she fondles, and then she frowns; and, most of all, is she ready in seizing the moments of idle confidence to press on my unprepared reason the arguments of kisses and coquetry."

"It were idle to say I do not understand you, Herr von Hartenburg. I wish not to raise the curtain of your domestic confidence, nor do I feel disposed that any should presume to lift mine. Heinrich and I pursue our several ways, as each deems right, though, I trust, always with the harmony of wedded interests, and I am little practised in the influence you mention. But, dear as Meta is to the heart of her mother—and surely no shoot from the parent stem ever gave fonder hopes, or justified more tender regard"—Ulrike folded her hands, and turned her meek blue eyes to heaven—"much as I esteem young Berchthold,

who is the child of my youth's nearest friend ; and gladly as I would see their young hearts for ever bound up in the same ties of family concord and matrimonial love, the common parents of lisping laughing babes that should cluster at my knee, giving the evening of life some compensation for the chill of its noon-tide—rather than aid thee in this unhallowed design ; rather than do aught, even in rebellious thought, against the altars of my God ; rather than set my selfishness in array against his dread power, or fancy wish of mine can prove excuse for sacrilege—I could follow the girl to her grave, with a tearless eye, and place my own head by her side, without regret for that calm decline which, when the weary probation of life is ended, Heaven grants to the deserving.”

The Count of Leiningen recoiled at the energy with which his companion spoke ; for none are so commanding as the mild when aroused to resistance, or so authoritative as the good when required to exhibit the beauty of their principles. He was disappointed ; but, though a sort of instinct warned him that he had no further hopes of gaining the assistance of Ulrike, and, almost without knowing it himself, the respect which he had always entertained for his companion was increased. Taking the hand she extended to him, in amity, the moment her excitement had a little abated, he was about to reply, when a footstep in the adjoining room, and a timid tap at the door, interrupted him.

“Thou canst enter,” said the Baron, believing that one of the castle maidens was without, and glad for the relief.

“A million of thanks for the honor,” returned Ilse, courtseying to the floor as she availed herself of the privilege. “This is the first time so great a favor ever befell me in Hartenburg, though, when a girl, as it might be a ruddy maiden like our Meta, I once was admitted to a closet in Heidelberg. There was I, and the late Burgo-master, Ulrike’s father, and the good wife, her mother, on a junketing, in our young days, to see the curiosities of the Elector’s Palace, and we had visited the tun——”

“Thou art sent to seek me ?” interrupted the mistress. “Hath Meta need of her mother ?”

“That may be always said of a certainty, for girls of that age are like the young of the nest, Herr Count, who are ever in danger of breaking their necks, if they take a

hasty flight, without the example of the old to give them prudence as well as courage. Twenty times each day—I know not an' if it be not fifty—do I say to our Meta, 'Do as thou wilt, child, an' thou dost nothing amiss.' I hold it to be wrongful to curb young humors so long as they are innocent; and therefore do I say, that kindness is a better rod than anger; and, in this reproving and chastening manner, Herr von Hartenburg, have I reared both Meta and her mother. Well, here you both are, in friendly communion, an' you were children of the same cradle!—and Heinrich Frey is yon, without, tasting the rhenish with the two churchmen that infect the castle——"

"Thou wouldst surely say frequent, good nurse."

"What matters a word, child! Infect or frequent are much the same, when one speaketh of the gentle and gay! I remember ye both young and handsome, and a pair that the whole town of Duerckheim said ought never to be parted; for if one was noble, the other was good; if one was strong and valiant, the other was fair and virtuous; but the ways of the world led ye on different paths and Heaven forbid that I should say aught against ways that so many travel!"

"And thou hast left Meta with those that infect the castle, to come and say this?"

"Naught like it. It is true I let the girl listen to a few of their idle words, for without experience a maiden may not know when to repulse an improper freedom; but for any levity to escape my eye, were as impossible as for my Lord Count to fail in duty to the Limburg altars. No, I complain not of the stranger nobles; for while he of Rhodes did many gentle offices in behalf of Meta, the reverend Abbé held me in discourse touching this heresy of Luther, and, I warrant you, ecclesiastic as he is, he went not away the worse for my opinion of the schismatic. We had goodly discourse on the dangers and tribulations of the times, and might have had much learning between us, but for young Berchthold, who fancied himself beating the forest, by the manner in which he threshed among the old armor of the hall, disturbing all present with the idle pretence of seeking a cross-bow for the Count's pleasure in the morning; as if the Herr Count would have hunted with less satisfaction because there were wise words uttered in his halls! The Hintermayers are a race I love, but this youth seemeth to be wanting of respect for years."

"And what hast done with my child?"

"Thou knowest it was thy desire she should say a few greetings to the fallen Lottchen; and when I thought the wandering cavalier had had his say, I beckoned the child away, in order that she might go to the hamlet on that errand. She will be none the worse for the discourse with that free cavalier, for naught so quickens virtue of the pure stamp as a little contamination with vice—it is like the base metal they put in gold, to make the precious ore hard and able to undergo many hands."

"Thou hast not suffered Meta to go unattended?"

"Didst ever know me fail in duty? Thy motherly heart is quick to take alarm, like the bird fluttering at each leaf that rustles. Not I, in sooth; I sent the vain Gisela to keep her company, and whispered our Meta well, as they departed, not to fail to draw instruction from her companion's light discourse, which, I will warrant, turns on naught else but the gallantries of these strangers. Oh! leave old Ilse to profit by anything edifying that may turn up, in the way of accident! I that never yet lost a good moral for want of pushing an opportunity! and here stands Ulrike as proof of what I have done. I owe you excuses, Herr Emich, for sending away your forester; but the boy vexed me with his clatter among the shields and arquebuses, and, in order to give him a wholesome lesson in silence, I sent him to see Meta safe to his mother's door, under the pretence of its being necessary to have a manly arm present, to beat off the barking curs of the hamlet."

"Does Heinrich know this?"

"In sooth, he is so beset with thy honor in being closeted with my Lord the Count, that he does little besides talk of it, and take his cup. When the child was thus cared for, by the one who first held her in arms, and one, too, whose experience is little short of threescore and fourteen, I saw not the necessity of calling him from his pleasures."

Ulrike smiled, and turning to the Count, who had been so much lost in thought as to give little heed to the words of the nurse, she offered him her hand, and they left the closet in company.

CHAPTER XIV.

“Ah, now soft blushes tinge her cheeks,
And mantle on her neck of snow.”—ROGERS.

THE cottage of Lottchen, the mother of Berchthold, was distinguished from the other habitations of the hamlet, only by its greater neatness, and by that air of superior comfort which depends chiefly on taste and habit, and of which poverty itself can scarcely deprive those who have been educated in the usages and opinions of a higher caste. It stood a little apart from the general cluster of humble roofs; and, in addition to its other marks of superiority, it possessed the advantage of a small inclosure, by which it was partially removed from the publicity and noise that rob most of the villages and hamlets of Europe of a rural character.

We have had frequent occasions to allude to the difficulty of conveying accurate ideas of positive things, or even of moral and political truths, while using the terms which use has appropriated to the two hemispheres, but which are liable to so much qualification in their respective meanings. What is comfort in one country would be thought great discomfort in another, and even the two higher degrees of comparison must always be understood subject to a right knowledge of their positive qualities. Thus most beautiful conveys nothing clear, unless we can agree on what is beautiful; while neatness and elegance, and even size, taken in their popular significations, become purely terms of local convention. Were we to say that the cottage of Lottchen Hintermayer resembled, in the least, one of those white and spotless dwellings, with its Venetian blinds and pillared piazzas, its grassy court in front, and its garden teeming with golden fruit in the rear, its acacias and willows shading the low roof, and its shrubbery exhaling the odors that a generous sun can extract, we should give such a picture to the reader as Europe nowhere presents—nowhere, because in those regions in which nature has been bountiful, man has been held in mental duress; and in those in which man is sufficiently advanced and free to require the indulgences we have named, nature denies the boons so necessary to their existence. Here, and here

only, do those whom fortune has not smiled upon, possess the union of comfort, space, retirement and luxury, which depend on the causes named, for it is only here that are found the habits necessary to their production, in conjunction with the required climate and a cheapness of material and land, to place the whole within the reach of those who are not affluent. We wish, therefore, to be understood as speaking, at all times, under the consciousness of this difference in the value of terms, for, without such an understanding, there will be little intelligence between us and our countrymen.

We have made this explanation, lest the reader might fancy some affinity between the hamlet of Hartenburg and one in the older settlements of the Union. The remoteness of the period might indeed give some reason to suspect such a resemblance, but were the tale one of our own times, it would be scarcely probable. The Germans, like all the more northern nations, are neat, in proportion to their several degrees of civilization; and the great frequency of the little capitals which dot its surface, and which have all been, more or less, beautified by their respective princes, has caused it to possess a greater number of spacious and cleanly towns, in proportion to its population, than are to be met with in most of the other countries of the European continent; but, as elsewhere, in that quarter of the world, the poor are poor indeed.

The little cluster of houses that were grouped beneath the salient bastions of Hartenburg, had the general character of poverty and humility which still belongs to nearly all such hamlets. The buildings were constructed of timber and mud, with thatched roofs, and openings to which, in that age, glass was a stranger. In speaking of the comfort of the dwelling of Lottchen, we wish to say little more than that it was superior to its fellows in these particulars, and that it had the additional merit of faultless neatness. The furniture, however, gave much stronger evidence of the former condition of its tenant. Enough of this description of property had been saved from the wreck of her husband's fortunes, to leave before the eyes of its mistress these traces of happier days—one of those melancholy consolations in adversity which are common among those whose fall has been broken by some light circumstances of mitigation, and which, as monitors to delicacy and tenderness, make touching appeals to the recollections of the

spectator. But Berchthold's mother had still better claims to the respect of those who came beneath her humble lintel. As we have already said, she had been the bosom friend of Ulrike in early youth, and, by education and character, she was still every way worthy of holding so near a trust with the wife of the Burgomaster. The allowance of her son was small in money, but the Count permitted his forester to use the game freely ; and, as German frugality left her mistress of the wardrobes of several generations, the respectable matron had never known absolute want, and was at all times able to make such a personal appearance as better suited her former than her present means. In addition to these advantages, Ulrike never visited the Jaegerthal without thought of her friend's necessities ; and full often, at times and seasons when this sacred duty could not be performed in person, was Ilse dispatched to the hamlet as the substitute of her considerate and affectionate mistress.

The cavalcade from the Abbey had, of necessity, passed the door of Lottchen, and she was fully aware of the intended visit. When, therefore, Meta, blooming and happy, entered the cottage, attended by the warder's daughter, and accompanied by Berchthold, though secretly rejoicing in what she saw, the pleased and watchful matron neither expressed nor felt surprise.

"Thy mother?" were the first words which passed the lips of the widowed Lottchen, after she had kissed the glowing and warm cheek of the girl.

"Is closeted with the Herr Emich, my father says ; else would she be sure to be here. She has sent me to say this."

"And thy father?" added Lottchen, with emphasis, glancing an uneasy eye from Meta to her son.

"He drinks of rhenish with the castle wassailers. Truly, my mother Lottchen, thou must find the hamlet unquiet with these graceless spirits in the hold. Our Limburg monks are scarcely so thirsty ; and for idle discourse, I know not their equal in Duerckheim, town of vanities and folly though it be, as good Ilse is apt to say."

Lottchen smiled, for she saw by the playful eye of her young visitor, that nothing unpleasant had occurred ; and giving Gisela welcome, she led the way within.

"Does Heinrich know of this visit?" asked the widow, when her young guests were seated, and with a painful interest in the answer.

"I tell thee, Lottchen, that my father quaffs with the strangers. Here is Berchthold thy son—the restless, impatient Berchthold—he can tell thee, mother, into what goodly company the Burgomaster of Duerckheim hath fallen!"

As Meta said this, she laughed, though, in very sooth, she scarce knew why. The more experienced Lottchen saw little else in the mirth of her young visitor than one of those buoyant impulses of youth which lead equally to gayety and sorrow, without sufficient cause; but she watched the countenance of her own child with solicitude, to note how far he sympathized with the merriment of Meta. Berchthold, by speaking, was the interpreter of his own thoughts.

"Since thou appealest to me," he said, "my answer is, that Heinrich Frey consorts at present with two as hopeless idlers as ever darkened door in Hartenburg. Truly, Brother Luther needs bestir himself for the Church, when such as these go forth in its garments!"

"Say what thou wilt, Master Berchthold," cried Gisela, "of the prating half-shaven Abbé, but respect him of Rhodes, as a soldier in evil fortune, and one that is both gentle and gallant."

"As gallant as thou wilt," cried Meta, with warmth. "Thy humor for mild discourse must be formed by the rude company of the bold, if thou stylest these gentle!"

Lottchen had examined each face earnestly, and her countenance brightened with the frankness and fervor of the last speaker. She was about to say something in guarded commendation of her judgment, when a light step was heard before the outer door, and Ulrike herself entered. Notwithstanding the early departure of the young people from the castle, and the trifling distance between its walls and the hamlet, so much leisure had been wasted in idle laughter by the way, or in culling flowers on the hill-side, that she had sufficient time to exhaust all that old Ilse had to recount concerning the manner in which she had disposed of her charge, and to follow them to the cottage, ere the discourse had gone farther. The meeting between the friends was, as wont, warm and happy. When the usual inquiries were exhausted, and a few unmeaning observations had been made by the girls, the younger part of the company were gotten rid of, under pretence of conducting Meta to witness the manner in

which Berchthold had arranged the nests for some doves, which had been a present from herself to his mother. The two parents saw the departure of their children, always accompanied by Gisela, with satisfaction; for each had need of a secret conference with the other, and both knew how apt youth and inclination were to prolong their absence by means of those thousand little delays which form the unconscious and innocent coquetry of love.

When left to themselves, Ulrike and Lottchen sat, for some time, with hands interlocked, regarding one another earnestly.

"Thou hast borne the trying season of the spring time well, good Lottchen," said the former, with affection. "I have no longer any fear that thy health might suffer in this damp abode."

"And thou lookest youthful and fair as when we strolled, like thy Meta there, laughing and thoughtless girls, on the heath of the Heidenmauer. Of all I have known, Ulrike, thou art the least changed by time, either in form or heart."

The gentle pressure, before they released each other's hands, was a silent pledge of their mutual esteem.

"Thou findest Meta blooming and happy?"

"As she meriteth to be—and Berchthold—I think him fast growing into the comeliness and form of his sire?"

"He is all I could wish—one qualification excepted, my friend; and that, thou well knowest, I do not wish him for any other reason than to satisfy Heinrich's scruples."

"For my child, that qualification is hopeless. Berchthold has too much generous indifference to gold, ever to accumulate, were the means his. But what hope is there for an humble forester, who travels his range of chase, follows his lord to ceremonies, or attends him in battle?"

"The Herr Emich values thy son, and I do think would fain do him favor. Were the Count earnestly to reason with Heinrich, all hope would not yet be lost."

Lottchen dropped her eyes to the work on which her needle was employed, for necessity had rendered her systematically industrious. The pause was long and thoughtful. But while Ulricke pondered on the chances of overcoming her husband's love of money and his worldly views, a very different picture had presented itself to the mind of her friend. The eyelids of the latter trembled, and a hot tear fell upon the linen in her lap.

"I have thought much of late, Ulricke," she said, "of the justice of burdening thy happiness and golden fortunes with the load of our adversity. Berchthold is young and brave, and there seems as little necessity as there is right in weighing thee and Meta down to our own level. I have anxiously wished for the means of counselling with some friend less interested than thou, on the fitness of what we do ; but it is difficult to speak of so delicate a subject without wronging thy daughter."

"If thou wouldest have the most disinterested and wisest of all advisers, Lottchen, take counsel of thine own heart."

"That tells me to be just to thee and Meta."

"Dost thou know aught of Berchthold's manners or mind that may have escaped the observation of an anxious mother, who desires to match her own child with none but the deserving?"

Lottchen smiled through her tears, and gazed at the mild features of Ulrike with reverence.

"If thou wouldest hear evil of the youth, do not come to her who hath no other hope, for the tidings. The orphan is the sole riches of his widowed mother, and thou mayest not get the truth from one that regards her treasure with so much covetousness."

"And dost thou fancy, Lottchen, that thy son in poverty is dearer to thee than is Meta to her mother, though Providence may have left us wealth and consideration ! Misfortune hath indeed changed thee, and thou art no longer the Lottchen of my young days !"

"I will say no more, Ulrike," answered the widow, in a low voice, speaking like one rebuked ; "I leave all to heaven and thee ! Thou art certain that were Berchthold Count of Leiningen, his and my desire would be to see Meta his bride."

A nearly imperceptible smile played upon the sweet mouth of Ulrike, for she bethought her of the recent discourse with Emich ; but there was neither suspicion nor discontent in the passing thought. She was too wise to put human nature to very severe tests, and much too meek to believe all who fell short of perfection unworthy of her esteem.

"We will think of things as they are," she answered, "and not dwell on impossible chances. Wert thou Ulrike and I Lottchen, none can believe more fervently than I,

that these opinions would undergo no change. Of Meta thou art sure, my friend ; but truth bids me say, that I fear Heinrich will never yield. His mind is much occupied with what the world deems its equality of interests ; and it will be hard, indeed, to bring him to balance virtues against gold."

"And is he so wrong ? Of what excellence is Bercht-hold possessed, that does not find at least its equal in Meta ?"

"Happiness cannot be bartered for, as we would look into the value of houses and lands. He is wrong ; and I could weep—oh, how bitterly I have wept !—that Heinrich Frey should be thus bent on casting the happiness of that artless and unpractised child on the rude chances of so narrow calculations. But we will still hope," added Ulrike, drying her tears, "and turn our thoughts to the more cheerful side."

"Thou saidst something of the power of my boy with the Count, and of his wish to do us service ?"

"I know no other means to move Heinrich's mind. Though kind and yielding to me in all matters that he believes touch my state, he believes that no woman is a fit judge of the world's interests ; and, I fear I should add, that, from too much familiarity with my poor means, he places his wife lowest among her sex in this particular ; there is no hope, therefore, that any words of mine can change him. But the Lord Emich has great hold on his judgment, for, Lottchen, they who prize the world's smiles, ever yield reverence to those that chance to possess them largely."

The widow dropped her eyes, for, rarely, in their numerous and friendly conferences, did her friend allude to the weaknesses of her husband.

"And the Herr Emich ?" she asked, desirous to change the discourse.

"The Count is much disposed to aid us, as I have said ; for I have laid bare to him our wishes this morning, and have much entreated him to do this kind act."

"It is not wont for thee to be the solicitor with the Herr von Hartenburg, Ulrike !" rejoined Lottchen, raising her eyes again to the countenance of her friend, across whose cheek there passed a flush so faint as to resemble the reflection of some bright color of her attire, while a still less obvious smile dimpled the skin. The looks that were

exchanged told of recollections that were both joyous and melancholy, being, as it were, hasty but comprehensive glances into the pregnant volume of the past.

"It was the first request," resumed Ulrike; "nor can I say the boon was absolutely refused, though its gift was coupled with a condition impossible to grant."

"If it were too much for thy friendship, it must have been hard indeed!"

Lottchen spoke under the influence of one of those sudden and keen impulses of disappointment which sometimes make the strong in principle momentarily forget their justice; and Ulrike perfectly understood the meaning of her words. The difference in their fortunes, the hopelessness of the future with the fallen Lottchen, and all the bitterness of unmerited contumely and poverty, the severe judgments which a thoughtless world inflicts on the unlucky, passed quickly through the mind of the latter, amid a tumult of regrets and recollections.

"Of this thou shalt judge for thyself, Lottchen," she answered calmly; "and when thou hast heard me, I require thy unconcealed reply, conjuring thee, by that long and constant friendship across which no cloud has ever yet passed, to lay bare thy soul, shading no thought, nor desiring to color even the most latent of thy wishes!"

"Thou hast only to speak!"

"Hast thou never suspected that all this warlike preparation in the hold, in the presence of the men-at-arms in Limburg, tends to no good?"

"Both speak of war; but the Elector is sore pressed, and it is now long since our Germany was at perfect peace."

"Nay, thy surmises must have gone beyond these general causes."

The look of surprise assured Ulrike she was mistaken.

"And Berchthold? Has he said naught of his Lord's intentions?" continued the latter.

"He talks of battles and sieges, like most of his years, and he often essays the armor of his grandfather, which lumbers yon closet; for thou knowest, though not of knightly rank, we have had soldiers in our race."

"Is he not angered against Limburg?"

"He is, and yet is he not. There is a little flame of resentment, I regret to say, in all of the Jaegerthal against the monks, which is much fanned in my son by his foster-brother, Gottlob, the cow-herd."

"This flame hath descended to the hind from his Lord. All that Gottlob says, Emich hath more than hinted."

"Nay, there was revelling in the hold, between Bonifacius and the Count, no later than the night past!"

"Too much blindness to that which passeth before thy eyes, dear Lottchen, is a virtuous feeling of thy nature. The Court of Hartenburg plots the downfall of the Abbey-altars, and he has this day sworn to me, that if I will win Heinrich to his wishes, no influence or authority of his shall be wanting to make Berchthold and Meta happy."

Lottchen heard this announcement with the silent amazement with which the unsuspecting and meek first hearken to the bold designs of the ambitious and daring.

"This would be sacrilege!" she exclaimed with emphasis.

"'Twould be to disgrace the altars of God, that our desires might prevail."

There was a pause. Lottchen rose from her chair, with so little effort, that, to the imagination of her excited friend, it seemed her stature grew by supernatural means. Then raising her arms, the widowed mother poured out her feelings in words.

"Ulrike, thou knowest my heart," she said; "thou, who art the sister of my love, if not of my blood—thou, from whom no childish thought was hid, no maiden feeling concealed—thou, to whom my mind was but a mirror of thine own, reflecting every wish, all impulses, each desire—and well dost thou know how dear to me is Berchthold! Thou canst say, that when Heaven took his father, the yearnings of a mother alone tempted me to live; that for him, I have borne adversity with contentment, smiling when he smiled, and rejoicing when the buoyancy of youth made him rejoice; that as for him I have lived, so that for him would I die. Thou canst say, Ulrike, that my own youthful and virgin affections were not yielded with greater delight and confidence than I have witnessed this growing tenderness for Meta; and yet do I here declare, in the presence of God and his works, that before a rebel wish of mine shall aid Count Emich in this act, there is no earthly sorrow I will not welcome, no humility that I will dread!"

The pious Lottchen sank into her seat, pale, trembling, and exhausted with an effort so unusual. The widowed mother of Berchthold had never possessed the rare per-

sonal attractions of her friend, and those which were left by time had suffered cruel marks from sorrow and depression. Still, where she now sat, her face beaming with the inspiration of the reverence she felt for the Deity, and her soul charged to bursting, Ulrike thought she had never seen one more fair. Her own eyes brightened with delight, for at that moment of spiritual elevation, neither thought of any worldly interests; and her strongest wish was that the Count of Hartenburg could be a witness of this triumph of principle over selfishness. Her own refusal, though so similar in manner and words, the natural result of their great unity of character, seemed destitute of all merit; for what was the simple denial of one of her means, compared to this lofty readiness to encounter a contumely that was already so bitterly understood.

"I expected no less," answered Ulrike, when emotion permitted speech: "from thee, Lottchen, less would have been unworthy, and more could scarcely come! We will now speak of other things, and trust to the power of the dread Being whose majesty is menaced. Hast thou yet visited the Heidenmauer?"

Notwithstanding the excited state of her own feelings, which were, however, gradually subsiding to their usual calm, Lottchen took heed of the change of manner in her friend as she uttered the last words, and the slight tremor of the voice with which her question was put.

"The kindness of the anchorite to Berchthold, and his great reputation for sanctity, drew me thither. I found him of mild discourse, and a recluse of great wisdom."

"Didst note him well, Lottchen?"

"As the penitent regards him who offers consolation."

"I would thou hadst been more particular!"

The widow glanced towards her friend in surprise, but immediately turned her eyes, that were still filled with tears, to her work. There was a moment of musing and painful pause, for each felt the want of their usual and entire confidence.

"Dost thou distrust him, Ulrike?"

"Not as a penitent, or one willing to atone."

"Thou disapprovest of the deference he receives from the country round?"

"Of that thou mayest judge, Lottchen, when I tell thee that I suffer Meta to seek counsel from him."

Lottchen showed greater surprise, and the silence was longer than before, and still more embarrassing.

"It is long since thou hast named to me, good Lottchen, one that was so much and so warmly in our discourse when we were girls!"

The amazement of the listener was sudden and marked. She dropped her work, and clasped her hands together with force.

"Dost thou believe this?" burst from her lips.

Ulrike bowed her head, apparently to examine the linen, though really unconscious of the act, while the hand she extended trembled violently.

"I have sometimes thought it," she answered, scarce speaking above a whisper.

A merry laugh, one of those joyous impulses which spring from the gayety of youth, was heard at the door, and Meta entered, followed by Berchthold and the warder's daughter. At this interruption the friends arose, and withdrew to an inner room.

CHAPTER XV.

"I pray thee, loving wife and gentle daughter,
Give even way unto my rough affairs."—*King Henry IV.*

ABOUT an hour after the moment when Ulrike and Lottchen disappeared, as described in the close of the last chapter, the cavalcade of Heinrich Frey was seen moving along the Jaegerthal, beneath the hill of Limburg, on its way towards the town. Four light-armed followers of Emich accompanied the party, on foot, under the pretence of doing honor to the Burgomaster, but in truth to protect him against insult from any stragglers belonging to the men-at-arms who lay in the Abbey—a precaution that was not altogether without utility, as the reader will remember that the path ran within call of the ecclesiastical edifices.

As the beasts ambled past the imposing towers and wide roofs, that were visible even to those who journeyed in that deep glen, Heinrich's countenance, which had been more than usually thoughtful ever since he passed beneath the gate of Hartenburg, grew graver; and Meta, who rode as usual at his crupper, heard him draw one of those heavy

respirations which were so many infallible signs that the mental part of her worthy parent was undergoing extraordinary exercises.

Nor did this shade appear only on the face of the Burgomaster. A deep and thoughtful gloom clouded the fine features of his wife, while the countenance of the blooming daughter betrayed that sort of sombre rest which is apt to succeed high excitement; a moment in which the mind appears employed in examining the past, as if disposed to dissect the merits and demerits of its recent enjoyments. Of them all, the male attendants alone excepted, old Ilse returned as she had gone, self-satisfied, unmoved, and talkative.

"Count Emich hath displeased thee, father," Meta said, quickly, when a respiration, which in one less physical would have been termed a sigh, gave her reason to think the Burgomaster's bosom was struggling with some bitter vexation; "else wouldest thou be more cheerful, and better disposed to give me thy parental counsel, as is thy habit when we go together on the pillion."

"The occasion shall not fail, girl; and these Abbey-walls offer in good time to prick my fatherly memory. But thou art in error if thou thinkest that the souls of the Herr Emich and mine are not bound together like those of David and Jonathan. I know not the man I more love, or, the Emperor and Elector apart, as is my duty, the noble I so much respect."

"It is well it is so, for I greatly value these airy rides among the hills, and most of all do I prize a visit to the cottage of Lottchen!"

Heinrich ejaculated audibly. Then, riding a short distance in silence, he continued the dialogue.

"Meta," he said, "thou art now getting to be of a womanish age, and it is time to fortify thy young mind in a manner that it may meet the cunning and malice of the world. Life is of great precariousness, especially to the valiant and enterprising, and we live in perilous times. He that is in his prime to-day, honored and of credit, may be cut down to-morrow, or even to-night, to bring the allusion more closely to ourselves; and thine own parent is as mortal as any reptile that creeps, or even as the most worthless roisterer of the Electorate, that wasteth his substance, the saving of some gainful parent, perhaps, in riotousness!"

"This is true, father," rejoined the girl, who, though accustomed to the homely morality of the good citizen, never before had heard the Burgomaster deal with so little deference to himself, and who spoke in a lowered tone, as if the reflection of his sudden humility produced a withering influence on her own self-esteem. "We are no better than the poorest of Duerckheim, and scarcely as good as poor Lottchen and Berchthold."

A stronger ejaculation betrayed Heinrich's displeasure.

"Let these honest people alone," he answered, "since each must be saved or be damned on his own account, let Lottchen and her son take such fare as Providence shall send; we have just now serious matters of great family concernment to occupy us. I would reason with thee gravely, child, and therefore I have need of thy closest attention. It being conceded that I am mortal—an admission thou mayest be certain, Meta, I should not loosely make or without necessity—it follows, as a consequence, that, sooner or later, I must be taken from thee, when thou wilt be left a orphan. Now this great calamity may befall us both much sooner than thou fanciest; for, I repeat it, we live in perilous times, when hot-headedness and valor may any day bring a man to a premature end."

The round arm of Meta clung more forcibly to the body of the Burgomaster, who took the gentle pressure as so much proof of his child's concern in his supposititious end.

"Why tell me of this, father?" she exclaimed, "when thou knowest it only makes both unhappy! Though young, it may be my fate to die first."

"That is possible, but little probable," returned Heinrich, with a melancholy air. "Giving nature a fair chance, it will be my turn to precede even thy mother, since I have ten good years the start of her; and as for thee, I greatly dread it will be, one day, thy misfortune to be left an orphan. God knows what will be the end of all these contentions that now beset us, and therefore I hold it wise to be prepared. Whenever the evil day of parting may come, Meta, thou wilt be left with a sore companion for one of tender years and little experience."

"Father!"

"I mean money, child, which is a blessing, or a curse, as it proveth. Were I taken suddenly away, many idle and dissolute gallants would beset thee, swearing by their mustaches and beards, that thou wert dearer to them than

the air they breathe, when in truth their sole desire would be to look into the leavings of the departed Burgomaster. There is great difficulty in marrying one of thy neutral condition happily, for, while want of birth closeth the door of the castle and the palace against thy entrance, ample means give thee right to look beyond the mere burgher. I would fain have one of good hopes for a son-in-law, and yet no spendthrift."

"That may not be so easy of accomplishment, good father," returned Meta, laughing, for few girls of her years listen to conjectures or plans concerning their future establishment without a nervous irritability that easily takes the appearance of merriment—"to me the world seems divided into those who get and those who spend."

"Or into the wise and foolish. There are three great ingredients that commonly enter into all marriages of girls in thy condition, and without which there is little hope of happiness, or even of every-day respect. The first is the means of livelihood, the second is the consent and blessing of the parents, and the third is equality of condition."

"I had thought thee about to say something of tastes and inclinations, father!"

"Idle conceit, child, that any whim may change. Look at yonder peasant, who is trimming the Abbey vines—dost think him less happy with his cup of sour liquor, than if he quaffed of the best rhenish in Bonifacius's cellar? And yet, had the hind his choice, doubt it not he would be ready to swear none but the liquor of Hockheim should wet lip of his! The fellow might make himself miserable, by mere dint of fancy, were he once to set his mind on other fare; but, taking life soberly and industriously, who so content as he? Oh! I have often envied these knaves their happiness, when vexation and losses have weighed upon my spirits!"

"And wouldest thou change conditions with these vine-trimmers, father?"

"What art thinking of, wench? Is there not such a thing as order and propriety on earth?—And this brings me to my purpose. There has been question to-day concerning some silliness, not to say presumption, on the part of young Berchthold Hintermayer, in wishing to couple his poverty with thy means."

The head of Meta fell abashed, and the arm, which clasped the body of her father, trembled perceptibly.

"I doubt that Berchthold has not thought of this," she answered, in a voice but little above her breath, though her respiration was very audible.

"All the better for him, since such a desire would be just as unreasonable as it would be, on thy part, to wish to wed with Count Emich's heir."

"Nay, that silly thought never crossed me!" exclaimed Meta, frankly.

"All the better for thee, girl, since the Herr von Hartenburg has had the boy betrothed these many years. Well, as we now understand each other so well, leave me to my thoughts, for weighty matters press on my mind."

So saying, Heinrich composed himself to reflection, fully content with the parental lesson he had just imparted to his daughter. But, in the few and vague remarks that had fallen from the Burgomaster, Meta found sufficient food for uncomfortable conjecture for the rest of the ride.

During the short dialogue between Heinrich and Meta, there had also been a discourse between Ulrike and the crone that rode on her pillion. The propensity of old Ilse to talk, and the well-tryed indulgence of her mistress, induced the former to break silence the moment they were clear of the hamlet, and were so far advanced beyond the rest of the party as to render it safe to speak freely.

"Well," exclaimed the nurse, "this hath been, truly, a day! First had we matins in Duerckheim; and then, the stirring words of Father Johan, with the Abbey mass; and lastly, this high demeanor of the Count Emich! I do not think, good wife, that thou hast ever before seen the Burgomaster so preferred!"

"He is ever in the graces of the Herr von Hartenburg, as thou mayest know, Ilse," returned Heinrich's partner, speaking like one that thought of other things. "I would that they were less friendly at this moment."

"Nay, therein thou dost little justice to thy husband. It is honorable to be honored by the world's honored, and thou shouldest wish the Burgomaster favor with all such, though it were even with the Emperor. But thou wert ever particular, even as a child; and I should not deal too harshly with a propensity that, coming as if it were of nature, is not without reason. Ah! Heaven is even tender with the good! Now what a happy life is thine, Ulrike; here canst thou go forth before all that were once thy equals, a Burgomaster's companion,—and not a varlet be-

tween Duerckheim-gate, or indeed thine own gate, and the hold of Hartenburg shall stand covered as thy steed shuffles past. This is it to be fortunate! Then have we worthy Heinrich for a master, and such another for keeping all in due respect is not to be seen in our town; and Meta, who, beyond dispute, is both the fairest and the wisest of her years among all the maidens, and thyself scarcely less blooming than of old, with such health and contentment as might even disarm widowhood of its sorrows. Ah! what a life hath been thine!"

Ulrike seemed to arouse herself from a trance, as the nurse thus chanted praises in honor of her good fortune, and the sigh she drew, unconscious of its meaning, was long and tremulous.

"I complain not of my fate, good Ilse."

"If thou didst, I would cause the beast to halt, that I might quickly descend, for nothing good could come of a journey so blasphemous! No, gratitude before all other virtues, except humility; for humility leadeth to favors, and favor is the lawful parent of gratitude itself. I would thou couldest have been at my last shriving, Ulrike, and thou shouldest have heard questions of nice meaning closely reasoned! It happened that Father Johan was in the confessional, and when he had got the little I had to say of myself in the way of acknowledgment, (for, though a great sinner like all human, it is little I can do against Heaven at threescore and ten,) we came to words concerning doctrine. The Monk maintained that the best of us might fall away, so as to merit condemnation; while I would have sworn, had it been seemly to swear in such a place, that the late Prior, than whom none better ever dwelt in Limburg, always gave comfortable assurance of mercy being safe, when fairly earned. I wonder not that these heresies should be abroad, when the professed throw this discouragement in the way of the old and weak!"

"Thou art too apt, good Ilse, to dwell on subtleties, when a meeker faith might better become thy condition."

"And what is this condition, prithee, that thou namest it as a disqualifier? Am I not aged—and can any say better what is sin, or what not? Didst thou know what sin was thyself, child, till I taught thee? Am I not mortal, and therefore frail—am I not a woman, and therefore inquiring—and am I not aged, and therefore experienced?"

No, come to me, an' thou wouldest get an insight into real sin—sin that hath much need of grace !”

“ Well, let it be thus. But, Ilse, I would recall thy mind to days long past, and take counsel of thy experience in a matter that toucheth me nearly.”

“ That must be some question of Meta ; naught else could touch a mother nearly.”

“ Thou hast reason in part : 'tis of Meta, and of us all, in sooth, that I would speak. Thou hast now been to the Heidenmauer more than once with our girl, in quest of the holy Anchorite ?”

“ Have I not ! Thou mayest well say more than once, since I have twice made that weary journey ; and few of my years would have come off so lightly from the fatigue.”

“ And what is said in the country round of the holy man—of his origin and history, I mean ?”

“ Much is said ; and much that is good and edifying is said. It is thought that one blessing of his is as good as two from the Abbey ; for of him no harm is known, whereas there is much reputed of Limburg that had better not be true. For myself, Ulrike—and I am one that does not treat these matters lightly—I should go away with more surety of favor with a single touch of the Hermit's hand, than if honored with blows from all of Limburg. But, from the account I except Father Arnolph, who if he be not an anchorite, well deserves, from his virtues, to be one. Oh ! that is a man, were justice done him, who ought never to taste other liquor than water of the spring, or other food than bread hard as a rock ?”

“ And hast thou seen him of the Heidenmaure ?”

“ It hath been sufficient for me to be in sight of his hut. I am none of those that cannot have a good thing in possession, without using it up. I have never laid eyes on the holy man, for that is a virtue I keep in store against some of the sore evils that beset all in age. Let any of the autumn plagues come upon me, and thou shalt see in what manner I will visit him !”

“ Ilse, thou mayest yet remember the days of my infancy, and hast some knowledge of most of the events of Duerckheim for these many, many years ?”

“ I know not what thou callest infancy, but if it mean the first cry thy feeble voice ever made, or the first glance of thy twinkling eyes, I remember both an' it were yesterday's vespers.”

"And thou hast not forgotten the youths and maidens that then sported at our merry-makings, and were gay in their time, as these we see to-day?"

"Call you these gay? These are hired mourners compared to those of my youth. You that have been born in the last fifty years know little of mirth and gayety. If thou wouldest learn——"

"Of this we can speak at another season. But since thy memory remains so clear, thou canst not have forgotten the young Herr von Ritterstein; he that was well received of old within my father's doors?"

Ulrike spoke in a low voice, but the easy movement of the beast they rode suffered every word to reach the ear of her companion.

"Do I remember Odo von Ritterstein?" exclaimed the crone. "Am I a heathen, to forget him or his crime?"

"Poor Odo! Bitterly hath he repented that transgression in banishment, as I have heard. We may hope that his offence is forgiven!"

"Of whom—of Heaven? Never, as thou livest, Ulrike, can such a crime be pardoned. It will be twenty years this night since he did that deed, as all in the Jaegerthal well know; for there have been masses and exorcisms without number said in the Abbey-chapel on his account. What dost take Heaven to be, that it can forget an offence like that!"

"It was a dreadful sin!" answered Ulrike, shuddering, for though she betrayed a desire to exonerate the supposed penitent, horror at his offence was evidently uppermost in her mind.

"It was blasphemy to God, and an outrage to man. Let him look to it, I say, for his soul is in cruel jeopardy!"

A heavy sigh was the answer of the Burgomaster's wife.

"I knew young Odo von Ritterstein well," continued the crone, "and, though not ill gifted as to outward appearance, and of most seductive discourse to all who would listen to a honeyed tongue, I can boast of having read his inmost nature at our very first acquaintance."

"Thou understood a fearful mystery!" half whispered Ulrike.

"It was no mystery to one of my years and experience. What is a comely face, and a noble birth, and a jaunting air, and a bold eye, to your woman that hath had her opportunities, and who hath lived long? Nay, nay—young

Odo's soul was read by me, as your mass-saying priest readeth his missal ; that is, with half a glance."

"It is surprising that one of thy station should have so quickly and so well understood him that most have found inexplicable. Thou knowest he was long in favor with my parents?"

"Aye, and with thee, Ulrike ; and this proves the great difference of judgments. But not a single day, nay, not even an hour, was I mistaken in his character. What was his name to me? They say he had crusaders among his ancestors, and that nobles of his lineage bore the sign of the cross, under a hot sun and in a far land, in honor of God ; but none of this would I hear. I saw the man with mine own eyes, and with mine own judgment did I judge."

"Thou sawest one, Ilse, of no displeasing mien."

"So thought the young and light-minded. I deny not his appearance ; 'twas according to Heaven's pleasure—nor do I say aught against his readiness in exercises, or any other esteemed and knightly qualities, for I am not one to backbite a fallen enemy. But he had a way ! Now when he came first to visit thy father, here did he enter the presence of the honest Burgomaster an' he had been the Elector, instead of a mere Baron ; and though there I stood, waiting to do him reverence as became his rank, and my breeding, nay, doing him reverence, and that oft repeated, not a look of grace, nor a thank, nor a smile of condescension did I get, for my pains. His eyes could not stoop to the old nurse, but were fastened on the face of the young beauty, besides many other levities.—Oh ! I quickly accounted him for what he was !"

"He was of contradictory qualities."

"Worse than that—a hundred-fold worse. I can count you up his graces in brief speech—First was he a roisterer, that never missed occasion to enter into all debaucheries with the very monks he dishonored——"

"Nay, that I did never hear !"

"Is it reasonable to suppose otherwise, after what we know of a certainty? Give me but one bold vice in a man, and I will quickly show you all its companions."

"And is this true? Ought we not rather to think that most yield in their weakest points, while they may continue to resist in the strongest?—That there are faults, which, inviting the world's condemnation, produce indifference to the world's opinion, may be true ; but I hope

few are so evil as not to retain some portion of their good qualities."

"Hadst thou ever seen a siege, good wife, thou wouldst not say this. Here is your enemy, without the ditch, shouting and screaming, and doing his worst to alarm the garrison.—I say now but what I have thrice seen here, in our very Duerckheim—but so long as the breach is not made, or the ladders placed, each goes his way in the streets, quietly and unharmed. But let the enemy once enter, though it be but by a window, or down a chimney, open fly the gates, and in pour the columns, horsemen and footmen, till not a house escapes rifling, nor a sanctuary violation. Now this blasphemy of Herr Odo was much as if a curtain of wall had fallen at once, letting in whole battalions and squadrons of vices in company."

"That the act was fearful, is as certain as that it was heavily punished; but still may it have been the fault of momentary folly, or of provoked resentment."

"It was blasphemy, and as such it is punished; why then say more in its defence? Here cometh Meta within call, and it were well she should not hear her mother justify sin. Remember thou art a mother, and bear thy charge with prudence."

As the horse ridden by the Burgomaster and his daughter drew near, Ulrike ceased speaking, with the patient forbearance that distinguished her intercourse with the old woman. And during the rest of the ride, little more passed among the equestrians. On reaching his own abode, however, Heinrich hastened to hold a secret council with the chief men of the place.

The remainder of the day passed as was wont in the towns of that age. The archers practised with their bows, without the walls; the more trained arquebusiers were exercised with their unwieldy but comparatively dangerous weapons; the youthful of the two sexes danced, while the wine-houses were thronged with artisans, who quaffed, after the toil of the week, the cheap and healthful liquor of the Palatinate, in a heavy animal enjoyment. Here and there a monk of the neighboring Abbey appeared in the streets, though it was with an air less authoritative and assured, than before the open promulgation of the opinions of Luther had brought into question so many of the practices of the prevailing Church,

CHAPTER XVI.

“Thus I renounce the world and worldly things.”—ROGERS.

It will be remembered, that the time of this tale was in the winning month of June. When the sun had fallen beneath those vast and fertile plains of the west, among which the Rhine winds its way, a swift and turbid, though noble current, that, like some bold mountaineer, has made a descent from the passes of Switzerland, to gather tribute from every valley on his passage, there remained in the air the bland and seductive warmth of the season.—Still the evening was not a calm moonlight night, like those which grace a more alluring climate; but there reigned in its quiet, a character of sombre repose that constantly reminded all of the hour. It seemed a moment more adapted to rest than to indulgence. The simple habits of Duerckheim caused its burghers to shut their doors early, and, as usual, the gates of the town were closed when the bells sounded the stroke of eight. The peasants of the Jaegerthal had not even waited so long, before they sought their beds.

It was, however, near ten, when a private door in the dwelling of Heinrich Frey opened, and a party of three individuals issued into the street. All were so closely muffled as effectually to conceal their persons. The leader, a man, paused to see that the way was clear, and then, beckoning to his companions, who were of the other sex, to follow, he pursued his way within the shadows thrown from the houses. It was not long ere they all reached the gate of the town, which opened to the hill of the Heidenmauer.

There was a stronger watch afoot that night, than was usual in Duerckheim, though the city, and especially at a moment when armies ravaged the Palatinate, was never left without a proper guard. A few armed men paced the street, at the point where it terminated with the defences, and a sentinel was visible on the superior wall.

“Who cometh?” demanded an arquebusier.

The muffled man approached, and spoke to the leader of the guard in a low voice. It would seem that he spoke him fair; for no sooner did he utter the little he had to say, than a bustle among the citizens announced an eager desire to do his pleasure. The keys were produced, and a

way made for the exit of the party. But the man went no farther. Having procured the egress of his companions, he returned into the town, stopping, however, to hold discourse with those on watch, before he disappeared.

When without the gate, the females began to ascend. The way was difficult, for it lay among terraces and vineyards, by means of winding narrow foot-paths, and, as it appeared, the limbs of those who were now obliged to thread them, felt all the difficulties of the steep acclivity. At length, though not without often stopping to breathe and rest, they reached the fallen pile of the ancient wall of the camp. Here both seated themselves, to recover their strength, in profound silence. They had mounted by means of a path that conducted them towards that extremity of the mountain which overlooked the valley of our tale.

The sky was covered with fleecy clouds, that dimmed the light of the moon so as to render objects beneath uncertain and dull; though occasionally the mild orb seemed to sail into a little field of blue, shedding all its light below. But these momentary illuminations were too fitful to permit the eye to become accustomed to the change, and ere any saw distinctly, the driving vapor would again intercept the rays. To this melancholy character of the hour, must be added the plaintive sound of a night-breeze, which audibly rustled the cedars.

A heavy respiration from the one of the two who, by her air and attire, was evidently the superior, was taken by the other as a permission to speak.

"Well, thrice in my life have I mounted this hill, at night!" she said: "and few of my years could do the deed, by the light of the sun——"

"Hist, Ilse! Hearest thou naught uncommon?"

"Naught but mine own voice, which, for so mute a person, is, in sooth, of little wont——"

"Truly, there is other sound! Come hither to the ruin; I fear we are abroad at a perilous moment!"

As both arose, there was but a minute before their persons were concealed in such a manner as to render it little probable that any but a very curious eye would remark their presence. It was evident that many footsteps were approaching, and nearly in their direction. Ilse trembled, but her companion, more self-possessed, and better supported by her reason, was as much or even more excited

by curiosity than by fear. The ruined hut, in which they stood, was within the cover of the cedars, where a dull light alone penetrated. By means of this light, however, a band of men was seen moving across the camp. They came in pairs, and their march was swift and nearly noiseless. The glittering of a morion, as it passed beneath some opening in the trees, and the reclining arquebuses, no less than their order, showed them to be warriors.

The line was long, extending to some hundreds of men. They came, in this swift and silent manner, from the direction of the Jaegerthal, and passed away, among the melancholy cedars, in that of the plain of the Rhine.

When the last of this long and ghost-like band had disappeared, Ilse appeared to revive.

"In very sooth," she said, "they seem to be men! Do they, too, come to visit the Holy Hermit?"

"Believe it not. They have gone down by the rear of Duerckheim, and will soon be beyond our wishes, or our fears."

"Lady! Of what origin are they—and on what errand do they come?"

This exclamation of old Ilse sufficiently betrayed the nature of her own doubts, though the firmness of her companion's manner proved that, now the armed men were gone, she no longer felt distrust.

"This may, or may not, be a happy omen," she answered, musingly. "There was a goodly number, and warriors, too, of fair appearance!"

"Thrice have I visited this camp at night, and never before has it been my fate to view its tenants! Thinkest thou they were Romans—or are they the followers of the Hun?"

"They were living men—but let us not forget our errand."

Without permitting further discourse, the superior of the two then took the way towards the hut of the Hermit. At first her footstep was timid and unassured; for, strengthened as she was by reflection and knowledge, the sudden and sprite-like passage of such a line of warriors across the deserted camp was indeed likely to affect the confidence of one even more bold.

"Rest thy old limbs on this bit of fallen wall, good nurse," said the muffled female, "while I go within. Thou wilt await me here."

"Go, of Heaven's mercy! and speak the holy Anchorite fair. Take what thou canst of comfort and peace for thine own soul, and if there should be a blessing, or a relic more than thou needest, remember her who fondled thy infancy, and who, I may say, and say it I do with pride, made thee the woman of virtue and merit thou art."

"God be with thee—and with me!" murmured the female, as she moved slowly away.

The visitor of the Anchorite hesitated at the door of his hut. Encouraged by sounds within, and certain that the holy man was still afoot, by the strong light that shone through the fissures of the wall, she at length summoned resolution to knock.

"Enter, of God's will!" returned a voice from within.

The door opened, and the female stood confronted to the person of the Anchorite. The cloak and hood both fell from the female's head, as by an involuntary weakness of her hands—and each stood gazing long, wistfully, and perhaps in doubt, at the other. The female, more prepared for the interview, was the first to speak.

"Odo!" she said, with melancholy emphasis.

"Ulrike!"

Eye then studied eye, in that eager and painful gaze with which the memory traces the changes that time and the passions produce in the human face. In that of Ulrike, however, there was little to be noted but the development of more mature womanhood, with such a shadowing of thought as deeper reflection and diminished hopes are apt to bring; but, had she not been apprised of the person of him she sought, and had her memory not retained so vivid an impression of the past, it is probable that the wife of Heinrich Frey might not have recognized the features of the gayest and handsomest cavalier of the Palatinate, in the sunken but still glowing eye, the grizzled beard, and the worn though bold lineaments of the Anchorite.

"Thou Odo, and a penitent!" Ulrike added.

"One of a stricken soul. Thou seest me, sworn to mortifications and sorrow."

"If repentance come at all, let it be welcome. Thou leanest on a rock, and thy soul will be upheld."

The recluse made a vague gesture, which his companion believed to be the usual sign of the cross. She meekly imitated the symbol, and, bowing her head, repeated an *ave*. In all great changes in religions and politics, the spirit of

party attaches importance to immaterial things, which, by practice and convention, come to be considered as the evidences of opinion. Thus it is, when revolutions are sudden and violent, that so many mistake their symbols for their substance, and men cast their lives on the hazards of battle, in order to support an empty name, a particular disposition of colors in an ensign, or some idle significations of terms that were never well explained, long after the real merits of the controversy have been lost by the cupidity and falsehood of those intrusted with the public welfare; and thus it is, that here, where all change has been gradual and certain, that the neglect of these trifles has subjected the country to the imputation of inconsistency, because, in attending so much to the substance of their work, it has overlooked so many of those outward signs, which, by being the instruments of excitement in other regions, obtain a value that has no influence among ourselves. The Reformation made early and rude inroads upon the formula of the Romish church. The cross ceased to be a sign in favor with the Protestant; and, after three centuries, it is just beginning to be admitted that this sacred symbol is a more fitting ornament of one of "those silent fingers pointing to the skies," which so touchingly adorn our churches, than the representation of a barn-yard fowl! Had Ulrike been more critical in this sort of distinctions, or had her mind been less occupied with her own sad reflections, she might have thought the movement of the Hermit's hand, when he made the sign alluded to, had such a manner of indecision and doubt, as equally denotes one new in practices of this nature, or one about to abandon any long-established ritual. As it was, however, she noted nothing extraordinary, but silently took the seat to which the Anchorite pointed, while he placed himself on another.

The earnest, wistful, and half mournful look of each was renewed. They sat apart, with the torch throwing its light fully upon both.

"Grief hath borne heavily upon thee, Odo," said Ulrike. "Thou art much changed!"

"And innocence and happiness have dealt tenderly by thee! Thou hast well merited this favor, Ulrike."

"Art thou long of this manner of life—or touch I on a subject that may not be treated?"

"I know not that I may refuse to give the world the profit of my lesson—much less can I pretend to mystery with thee."

"I would gladly give thee consolation. Thou knowest there is great comfort in sympathy."

"Thy pity is next to the love of angels—but why speak of this? Thou art in the hut of a hermit condemned, of his own conscience, to privation and penitence. Go to thy happy home, and leave me to the solemn duty which I have allotted to be done this night."

As he spoke, the Anchorite folded his head in a mantle of coarse cloth, for he was evidently clad to go abroad, and he groaned.

"Nay, Odo, I quit thee not, in this humor of thy mind. The sight of me hath added to thy grief, and it were uncharitable—more, it were unkind, to leave thee thus."

"What wouldst thou, Ulrike?"

"Disburthen thy soul; this life of seclusion hath heaped a load too heavy on thy thoughts. Where hast thou passed the years of thy prime, Odo—what hath brought thee to this condition of bitterness?"

"Hast thou still so much of womanly mercy, as to feel an interest in the fate of an outcast?"

The paleness of Ulrike's cheek was succeeded by a mild glow. It was no sign of tumultuous feeling, but a gentle proof that a heart like hers never lost the affinities it had once fondly and warmly cherished.

"Can I forget the past?" she answered. "Wert thou not the friend of my youth—nay, wert thou not my betrothed?"

"And dost thou acknowledge those long-cherished ties? Oh Ulrike! with what maddened folly did I throw away a jewel beyond price! But listen and thou shalt know in what manner God hath avenged himself and thee."

The Burgomaster's wife, though secretly much agitated, sat patiently awaiting, while the Hermit seemed preparing his mind for the revelation he was about to make.

"Thou hast no need to hear aught of my youth," he at length commenced. "Thou well knowest that, an orphan from childhood, of no mean estate, and of noble birth, I entered on life exposed to all the hazards that beset the young and thoughtless. I had most of the generous impulses of one devoid of care, and a heart that was not needlessly shut against sympathy with the injured, and, I think, I may say one that was not closed against compassion——"

"Thou dost not justice to thyself, Odo! Say that thy hand was open, and thy heart filled with gentleness."

The Anchorite, humbled as he was by penitence and self-devotion, did not hear this opinion, uttered by lips so gentle and so true, without a change of features. His eye lighted, and for a moment it gazed towards his companion with some of its former bright, youthful expression. But the change escaped Ulrike, who was occupied with the generous impulse that caused her, thus involuntarily, to vindicate the Hermit to himself.

"It might have been so," the latter resumed, coldly, after a moment of thought ; "but in youth, unless watched and wisely directed, our best qualities may become instruments of our fall. I was of violent passions above all ; miserable traces in that unerring index, the countenance, prove how violent !"

Ulrike had no answer to this remark ; for she had felt how easy it is for the strong of character to attach the mild, and how common it is for the human heart to set value on qualities that serve to throw its own into relief.

"When I knew thee, Ulrike, the influence of thy gentleness, the interest thou gavest me reason to believe thou felt in my happiness, and the reverence which the young of our sex so readily pay to innocence, and beauty, and faith, in thine, served to tame the lion of my reckless temper, and to bring me, for a time, in subjection to thy gentleness."

His companion looked grateful for his praise, but she remained silent.

"The tie between the young and guiltless is one of nature's holiest mysteries ! I loved thee, Ulrike, purely, and in perfect faith ! The reverence I bear, here in my solitude and penance, to these signs of sacred character, is not deeper, less tinctured with human passion, or more fervent, than the respect I felt for thy virgin innocence !"

Ulrike trembled, but it was like the leaf quivering at the passage of a breath of air.

"For this I gave thee credit, Odo," she whispered, evidently afraid to trust her voice.

"Thou didst me justice. When thy parents consented to our union, I looked forward to the marriage with blessed hope ; for young though I was, I so well understood myself, as to foresee that some spirit, persuasive, good, and yet firm as thine, was necessary to tame me. Woman winds herself about the heart of man by her tenderness, nay, by

her very dependence, in a manner to effect that which his pride would refuse to a power more evident."

"And couldst thou feel all this?"

"Ulrike, I felt more, was convinced of more, and dreaded more, than I ever dared avow. But all feelings of pride are now past. What further shall I say? Thou knowest the manner in which bold spirits began to assail the mysteries and dogmas of the venerable Church that has so long governed Christendom, and that some were so hardy as to anticipate the reasonings and changes of more prudent heads, by rash acts. 'Tis ever thus with young and heated reformers of abuses. Seeing naught but the wrong, they forget the means by which it has been produced, and overlook the sufficient causes which may mitigate, if they do not justify the evil."

"And this unhappily was thy temper?"

"I deny it not. Young, and without knowledge of the various causes that temper every theory when reduced to practice, I looked eagerly to the end alone."

Though Ulrike longed to extort some apology from the penitent for his own failings, she continued silent. After minutes of thought, the discourse at length proceeded.

"There were some among thy friends, Odo, who believed the outrage less than the convent reported?"

"They trusted too much to their wishes," said the Anchorite, in a subdued tone. "It is most true, that, heated with wine, and maddened with anger, I did violence in presence of my armed followers, to those sacred elements which Catholics so reverence. In a moment of inebriated frenzy, I believed the hoarse applause of drunken parasites, and the confusion of a priest, of more account than the just anger of God! I impiously trampled on the Host, and sorely hath God since trampled on my spirit!"

"Poor Odo!—That wicked act changed the course of both our lives! and dost thou now adore that Being to whom this great indignity was offered—Hast thy mind returned to the faith of thy youth?"

"'Tis not necessary, in order to feel the burthen of my guilt!" exclaimed the Anchorite, whose eye began to lose the human expression which had been kindled by communion with this gentle being, in gleamings of a remorse that had been so long fed by habits of morbid devotion. "Is not the Lord of the universe my God? The insult was to Him; whether there be error in this or that form

of devotion, I was in His temple, at the foot of His altar, in the presence of His spirit—There did I mock His rule, and defy His power; and this for a silly triumph over a terrified monk!”

“Heart-stricken Odo! Where soughtest thou refuge, after the frantic act?”

The Anchorite looked intently at his companion, as if a flood of distressing and touching images were pressing painfully upon his memory. “My first thought was of thee,” he said; “the rash blow of my sword was no sooner given, than it seemed suddenly to open an abyss between us. I knew thy gentle piety, and could not, even in that moment of frenzy, deceive myself as to thy decision. When in a place of safety, I wrote the letter which thou answered, and which answer was so firm and admirable a mixture of holy horror and womanly feeling. When thou renounced me, I became a vagrant on earth, and from that hour to the moment of my return hither, have I been a wanderer. Much influence and heavy fines saved my estates, which the life of a pilgrim and a soldier has greatly augmented, but never till this summer have I felt the courage necessary to revisit the scenes of my youth.”

“And whither strayed thou, Odo?”

“I have sought relief in every device of man:—the gayety and dissipation of capitals—hermitages (for this is but the fourth of which I am the tenant)—arms—and rude hazards by sea. Of late have I much occupied myself in the defence of Rhodes, that unhappy and fallen bulwark of Christendom. But wherever I have dwelt, or in whatever occupation I have sought relief, the recollection of my crime, and of its punishment, pursues me. Ulrike, I am a man of woe!”

“Nay, dear Odo, there is mercy for offenders more heavy than thou. Thou wilt return to thy long-deserted castle, and be at peace.”

“And thou, Ulrike! hath my crime caused thee sorrow? Thou, at least, art happy?”

The question caused the wife of Heinrich Frey uneasiness. Her sentiments towards Odo von Ritterstein had partaken of passion, and were still clothed with hues of the imagination; while her attachment to the Burgomaster ran in the smoother channel of duty and habit:—Still time, a high sense of her sex’s obligations, and the common bond of Meta, kept her feelings in the subdued state

which most fitted her present condition. Had her will been consulted, she would not have touched on this portion of the subject at all ; but since it was introduced, she felt the absolute necessity of meeting it with composure.

"I am happy in an honest husband and an affectionate child," she said ; "set thy heart at rest on this account—we were not fitted for each other, Odo ; thy birth, alone, offered obstacles we might not properly have overcome."

The Anchorite bowed his head, appearing to respect her reserve. The silence that succeeded was not free from embarrassment. It was relieved by the tones of a bell that came from the hill of Limburg. The Anchorite arose, and all other feeling was evidently lost in a sudden return of that diseased repentance which had so long haunted him, and which, in truth, had more than once gone nigh to unsettle his reason.

"That signal, Ulrike, is for me."

"And dost thou go forth to Limburg at this hour?"

"An humble penitent. I have made my peace with the Benedictines by means of gold, and I go to struggle for my peace with God. This is the anniversary of my crime, and there will be midnight masses for its expiation."

The wife of Heinrich Frey heard of his intention without surprise, though she regretted the sudden interruption of their interview.

"Odo, thy blessing !" said Ulrike, kneeling.

"Thou, ask this mockery of me !" cried the Hermit, wildly.—"Go, Ulrike !—leave me with my sins."

The Anchorite appeared irresolute for a moment, and then he rushed madly from the hut, leaving the wife of Heinrich Frey still kneeling in its centre.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Mona, thy Druid rites awake the dead !"—ROGERS.

ULRIKE was in the habit of making frequent and earnest appeals to God, and she now prayed fervently, where she knelt. Her attention was recalled to earth by a violent shaking of the shoulder.

"Ulrike, child!—Frau Frey!" exclaimed the assiduous Ilse.—"Art glued to the ground by necromancy? Why art thou here, and whither hath the holy man sped?"

"Sawest thou Odo von Ritterstein?"

"Whom! Art mad, Frau? I saw none but the blessed Anchorite, who passed me an' he were an angel taking wing for heaven; and though I knelt and beseeched but a look of grace, his soul was too much occupied with its mission to note a sinner. Had I been evil as some that might be named, this slight might give some alarm; but being that I am, I set it down rather to the account of merit than to that of any need. Nay, I saw naught but the Hermit."

"Then didst thou see the unhappy Herr von Ritterstein!"

Ilse stood aghast.

"Have we harbored a wolf in sheep's clothing," she cried, when the power of speech returned. "Hath the Palatinate knelt, and wept, and prayed at the feet of a sinner, like ourselves—nay, even worse than ourselves, after all! Hath what hath passed for true coin been naught but base metal—our unction, hypocrisy—our hopes, wicked delusions—our holy pride, vanity?"

"Thou sawest Odo von Ritterstein, Ilse," returned Ulrike, rising, "but thou sawest a devout man."

Then giving her arm to the nurse, for of the two the attendant most required assistance, she took the way from the hut. While walking among the fallen walls of the deserted camp, Ulrike endeavored to bring her companion to consider the character and former sins of the Anchorite with more lenity. The task was not easy, for Ilse had been accustomed to think the truant Odo altogether abandoned of God, and opinions that have been pertinaciously maintained for twenty years, are not gotten rid of in a moment. Still there is a process by which the human mind can be made to do more than justice, when prejudice is finally eradicated. It is by this species of reaction, that we see the same individuals now reprobated as monsters, and now admired as heroes; the common sentiment as rarely doing strict justice in excessive applause as in excessive condemnation.

We do not mean to say, however, that the sentiment of Ilse toward the Anchorite underwent this violent revulsion from detestation to reverence; for the utmost that Ulrike

could obtain in his favor, was an admission that he was a sinner in whose behalf all devout Christians might without any manifest impropriety occasionally say an *ave*. This small concession of Ilse sufficiently favored the wishes of her mistress, which were to follow the Hermit to the Abbey church, to kneel at its altars, and to mingle her prayers with those of the penitent, on this the anniversary of his crime, for pardon and peace. We pretend not to show by what cord of human infirmity the wife of Heinrich Frey was led into the indulgence of a sympathy so delicate, with one to whom her hand had formerly been plighted ; for we are not acting here in the capacity of censors of female propriety, but as those who endeavor to expose the workings of the heart, be they for good or be they for evil. It is sufficient for our object, that the result of the whole picture shall be a lesson favorable to virtue and truth.

So soon as Ulrike found she could lead her companion in the way she wished, without incurring the risk of listening to stale morals dealt out with a profuse garrulity, she took the path directly towards the convent. As the reader has most probably perused our Introduction, there is no necessity of saying more than that Ulrike and her attendant proceeded by the route we ourselves took in going from one mountain to the other. But the progress of Ilse was far slower than that described as our own, in ascending to the Heidenmauer under the guidance of Christian Kinzel. The descent itself was long and slow, for one of her infirmities and years, and the ascent far more tedious and painful. During the latter, even Ulrike was glad to halt often, to recover breath, though they went up by the horse-path over which they had ridden in the morning.

The character of the night had not changed. The moon appeared to wade among fleecy clouds as before, and the light was misty but sufficient to render the path distinct. At this hour, the pile of the convent loomed against the sky, with its dark Gothic walls and towers, resembling a work of giants, in which those who had reared the structure were reposing from their labors. Accustomed as she was to worship at its altars, Ulrike did not now approach the gate without a sentiment of admiration. She raised her eyes to the closed portal, to the long ranges of dark and sweeping walls, and everywhere she met evidences of midnight tranquillity. There was a faint glow upon the side of the narrow giddy tower, that contained the bells, and

which flanked the gate ; and she knew that it came from a lamp that burnt before the image of the Virgin in the court. This gave no sign that even the porter was awake. She stepped, however, to the wicket, and rang the night-bell. The grating of the bolts quickly announced the presence of one within.

"Who cometh to Limburg at this hour?" demanded the porter, holding the wicket chained, as if distrusting treachery.

"A penitent to pray."

The tones of the voice assured the keeper of the gate, who had means also of examining the stranger with the eye, and he so far opened the wicket as to permit the form of Ulrike to be distinctly seen.

"It is not usual to admit thy sex within these holy walls, after the morning mass hath been said, and the confessionals are empty."

"There are occasions on which the rule may be broken, and the solemn ceremony of to-night is one."

"I know not that.—Our reverend Abbot is severe in the observance of all decencies——"

"Nay, I am one closely allied to him in whose behalf this service is given," said Ulrike, hastily.—"Repel me not, for the love of God!"

"Art thou of his kin and blood?"

"Not of that tie," she answered, in the checked manner of one who felt her own precipitation, "but bound to his hopes by the near interests of affection and sympathy."

She paused, for at that instant the form of the Anchorite filled the space beside the porter. He had been kneeling before the image of a crucifix hard by, and had been called from his prayers by the soft appeal that betrayed Ulrike's interest in him, every tone of which went to his heart.

"She is mine," he said, authoritatively ;—"she and her attendant are both mine.—Let them enter!"

Ulrike hesitated—she scarce knew why,—and Ilse, wearied with her efforts, and impatient to be at rest, was obliged to impel her forward. The Hermit, as if suddenly recalled to the duty on which he had come to the convent, turned and glided away. The porter, who had received his instructions relative to him for whom the mass was to be said, offered no further obstacle, but permitted Ilse to conduct her mistress within. No sooner were the females in the court, than he closed and barred the wicket.

Ulrike hesitated no longer, though she trembled in every limb. Dragging the loitering Ilse after her with difficulty, she took the way directly toward the door of the chapel. With the exception of the porter at the wicket, and the lamp before the Virgin, all seemed as dim and still within as it had been without the Abbey-walls. Not even a sentinel of Duke Friedrich's men-at-arms was visible ; but this occasioned no surprise, as these troops were known to keep as much aloof from the more religious part of the tenants of Limburg, as was possible. The spacious buildings, in the rear of the Abbot's dwelling, might well have lodged double their number, and in these it was probable they were now housed. As for the monks, the lateness of the hour, and the nature of the approaching service, fully accounted for their absence.

The door of the Abbey-church was always open. This usage is nearly common to every Catholic place of worship in towns of any size, and it contains an affecting appeal, to the passenger, to remember the Being in whose honor the temple has been raised. The custom is, in general, turned to account equally by the pious and the inquisitive, the amateur of the arts, and the worshipper of God ; and it is to be regretted that the former, more especially when they belong to a different persuasion or sect, should not oftener remember, that their taste becomes bad, when it is indulged at the expense of that reverence which should mark all the conduct of man in the immediate presence of his Creator. On the present occasion, however, there were none present to treat either the altar or its worship with levity. When Ulrike and Ilse entered the chapel, the candles of the great altar were lighted, and the lamps of the choir threw a gloomy illumination on its sombre architecture. The fretted and painted vault above, the carved oak of the stalls, the images of the altar, and the grave and kneeling warriors in stone, that decorated the tombs, stood out prominent in the relief of their own deep shadows.

If it be desirable to quicken devotion by physical auxiliaries, surely all that was necessary to reduce the mind to deep and contemplative awe existed here. The officials of the altar swept past the gorgeous and consecrated structure in their robes of duty ; grave, expectant monks were in their stalls, and Boniface himself sat on his throne, mitred and clad in vestments of embroidery. It is possible that an inquisitive and hostile eye might have detected in

some weary countenance or heavy eyelid longings for the pillow, and little sympathy in the offices; but there were others who entered on their duties with zeal and conviction. Among the last was Father Arnolph, whose pale features and thoughtful eye were seen in his stall, where he sat regarding the preparations with the tranquil patience of one accustomed to seek his happiness in the duties of his vow. To him might be put in contrast the unquiet organs and severe, rather than mortified, lineaments of Father Johan, who glanced hurriedly from the altar, and its rich decorations, to the spot where the Anchorite knelt, as if to calculate to what degree of humiliation and bitterness it were possible to reduce the bruised spirit of the penitent.

Odo of Ritterstein, for there no longer remains a reason for refusing to the Anchorite his proper appellation, had placed himself near the railing at the foot of the choir, on his knees, where he continued with his eyes fixed on the golden vessel that contained the consecrated host he had once outraged—the offence which he had now come, as much as in him lay, to expiate. The light fell but faintly on his form, but it served to render every furrow that grief and passion had drawn athwart his features more evident. Ulrike studied his countenance, seen as it was in circumstances of so little flattery; and, trembling, she knelt by the side of Ilse, on the other side of the little gate that served to communicate between the body of the church and the choir. Just as she had assumed this posture, Gottlob stole from among the pillars, and knelt in the distance, on the flags of the great aisle. He had come to the mass as a ceremony refused to none.

So strong was the light around the altar, and so obscure the aisles below, that it was with difficulty Bonifacius could assure himself of the presence of him in whose behalf this office was had. But when, by contracting his heavy front, so as to form a sort of screen of his shaggy brows, he was enabled to distinguish the form of Odo, he seemed satisfied, and motioned for the worship to proceed.

There is little need to repeat the details of a ceremony it has been our office already to relate in these pages; but as the music and other services had place in the quiet and calm of midnight, they were doubly touching and solemn. There was the same power of the single voice as in the morning, or rather on the preceding day, for the turn of

the night was now passed, and the same startling effect was produced, even on those who were accustomed to its thrilling and superhuman melody. As the mass proceeded, the groans of the Anchorite became so audible, that, at times, these throes of sorrow threatened to interrupt the ceremonies. The heart of Ulrike responded to each sigh that escaped the bosom of Odo, and, ere the first prayers were ended, her face was bathed in tears.

The examination of the different countenances of the brotherhood, during this scene, would have been a study worthy of a deep inquirer into the varieties of human character, or of those who love to trace the various forms in which the same causes work on different tempers. Each groan of the Anchorite lighted the glowing features of Father Johan with a species of holy delight, as if he triumphed in the power of the offices; and, at each minute, his head was bent inquiringly in the direction of the railing, while his ear listened eagerly for the smallest sound that might favor his desires. On the other hand, the working of the Prior's features were those of sorrow and sympathy. Every sigh that reached him awakened a feeling of pity—blended with pious joy, it is true—but a pity that was deep, distinct, and human. Bonifacius listened like one in authority, coldly, and with little concern in what passed beyond that which was attached to a proper observance of the ritual; and, from time to time, he bent his head on his hand, while he evidently pondered on things that had little connection with what was passing before his eyes. Others of the fraternity manifested more or less of devotion, according to their several characters; and a few found means to obtain portions of sleep, as the rights admitted of the indulgence.

In this manner did the community of Limburg pass the first hours of the day, or rather of the morning, that succeeded the Sabbath of this tale. It may have been, afterwards, source of consolation to those among them that were most zealous in the observance of their vows, that they were thus passed; for events were near that had a lasting influence not only on their own destinies, but on those of the very region in which they dwelt.

The strains of the last hymn were rising into the vault above the choir, when, amid the calm that exquisite voice never failed to produce, there came a low rushing sound, which might have been taken for the murmuring of wind,

c. for the suppressed hum of a hundred voices. When it was first heard, stealing among the ribbed arches of the chapel, the cow-herd arose from his knees, and disappeared in the gloomy depths of the church. The monks turned their heads, as by a general impulse, to listen, but the common action was as quickly succeeded by grave attention to the rites. Bonifacius, indeed, seemed uneasy, though it was like a man who scarce knew why. His gray eyes roamed over the body of darkness that reigned among the distant columns of the church, and then they settled, with vacancy, on the gorgeous vessels of the altar. The hymn continued, and its soothing power appeared to quiet every mind, when the sound of tumult at the great gate of the outer wall became too audible and distinct to admit of doubt. The whole brotherhood arose as a man, and the voice of the singer was mute. Ulrike clasped her hands in agony, while even Odo of Ritterstein forgot his grief, in the rude nature of the interruption.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“Thy reason, dear venom, give thy reason!”—*Twelfth Night*.

It is scarcely necessary to explain, that the man who had accompanied Ulrike and Ilse to the gate of Duerckheim, was Heinrich Frey. No sooner had his wife disappeared, and his short conference with the men on watch was ended, than the Burgomaster hurried towards that quarter of the town which lay nearest to the entrance of the Jaegerthal. Here he found collected a band of a hundred burghers, chosen from among their townsmen, for resolution and physical force. They were all equipped, according to the fashion of the times, with such weapons of offence as suited their several habits and experience. We might also add, that, as each good man, on going forth on the present occasion, had seen fit to consult his bosom's partner, there was more than the usual display of head-pieces, and breastplates, and bucklers.

When with his followers, and assured of their exactitude and numbers, the Burgomaster, who was a man nowise deficient in courage, ordered the postern to be opened, and issued first himself into the field. The townsmen suc-

ceeded in their allotted order, observing the most profound silence. Instead of taking the direct road to the gorge, Heinrich crossed the rivulet, by a private bridge, pursuing a footpath that led him up the ascent of the most advanced of the mountains, on that side of the valley. The reader will understand, that this movement placed the party on the hill which lay directly opposite to that of the Heidenmauer. At the period of the tale, cedars grew on the two mountains alike, and the townsmen, of course, had the advantage of being concealed from observation. A half-hour was necessary to effect this lodgment, with sufficient caution and secrecy; but once made, the whole band seemed to consider itself beyond the danger of discovery. The men then continued the march with less attention to order and silence, and even their leaders began to indulge in discourse. Their conversation was, however, guarded, like that of those who felt they were engaged in an enterprise of hazard.

"'Tis said, neighbor Dietrich," commenced the Burgo-master, speaking to a sturdy smith, who acted on this occasion as lieutenant to the commander-in-chief, an honor that was mainly due to the power of his arm, and who, emboldened by his temporary rank, had advanced nearly to Heinrich's side, "'Tis said, neighbor Dietrich, that these Benedictines are like bees, who never go forth but in the season of plenty, and rarely return without rich contribution to their hive. Thou art a reflecting and solid townsman; one that is little moved by the light opinions of the idle, and a burgher that knoweth his own rights, which is as much as to say, his own interests, and one that well understandeth the necessity of preserving all of our venerable usages and laws, at least in such matters as touch the permanency of the welfare of those that may lay claim to have a welfare. I speak not now of the varlets who belong, as it were, neither to heaven nor earth, being condemned of both to the misery of houseless and irresponsible knaves; but of men of substance, that, like thee and thy craft, pay scot and lot, keep bed and board, and are otherwise to be marked for their usefulness and natural rights;—and this brings me to my point, which is neither more nor less than to say, that God hath created all men equal, and therefore it is our right, no less than our duty, to see that Duerckheim is not wronged, especially in that part of her interests that belong in particularity, to her substan-

tial inhabitants. Do I say that which is reasonable, or do I deceive both myself and thee, friend smith?"

Heinrich had a reputation for eloquence and logic, especially among his own partisans, and his appeal was now made to one who was little likely to refuse him any honor. Dietrich was one of those animal philosophers who seem specially qualified by nature to sustain a parliamentary leader, possessing a good organ, with but an indifferent intellect to derange its action. His mind had precisely the description of vacuum which is so necessary to produce a good political or moral echo, more particularly when the proposition is false; for the smallest addition to his capacity might have had such an effect on his replies, as a sounding-board is known to possess in defeating the repetitions of the voice.

"By St. Benedict, Master Heinrich," he answered, "for it is permitted to invoke the saint, though we so little honor his monks, it were well for Duke Friedrich had he less wine in his Heidelberg tuns, and more of your wisdom in his councils! What you have just proclaimed is no other than what I have myself thought these many years, though never able to hammer down an idea into speech so polished and cutting as this of your worship! Let them that deny what I say take up their weapons, and I will repose on my sledge as on an argument not to be answered. We must, in sooth, see Duerckheim righted, and more is the need, since there is this equality between all men, as hath just been so well said."

"Nay, this matter of equality is one much spoken of, but as little understood. Look you, good Dietrich; give me thy ear for a few minutes, and thou shalt get an insight into its justice. Here are we of the small towns born with all properties and wants of those in your large capitals—are we not men to need our privileges—or are we not human, that air is unnecessary for breath—I think thou wilt not gainsay either of these truths."

"He that would do it is little better than an ass!"

"This being established, therefore, naught remains but to show the conclusion. We, having the same rights as the largest towns in the empire, should be permitted to enjoy them; else is language little better than mockery, and a municipal privilege of no more value than a serf's oath."

"This is so clear I marvel any should deny it! And

what say they of the villages, Master Burgomaster? Will they, think you, sustain us in this holy cause?"

"Nay, I touch not on the villages, good smith, since they have neither burgomasters nor burghers; and where there is so little to sustain a cause, of what matter is resistance. I speak chiefly of ourselves, and of towns having means, which is a case so clear, that it were manifest weakness to confound it with any other. He that hath right of his side were a fool to enter into league with any of doubtful franchises. All have their natural and holy advantages, but those are the best which are most clear by their riches and force."

"I pray you, worshipful Heinrich, grant me but a single favor, an' you love me so much as a hair?"

"Name thy will, smith."

"That I may speak of this among the townsmen!—such wisdom, and conclusion so evident, should not be cast to the winds."

"Thou knowest I do not discourse for vain applause."

"By my father's bones! I will touch upon it with discretion, most honorable Burgomaster, and not as one of vain speech—your honor knows the difference between a mere street babbler and one that hath a shop."

"Have it as thou wilt; but I take not the merit of originality, for there are many good and substantial citizens, and some statesmen, who think much in this manner."

"Well, it is happy that God hath not gifted all alike, else might there have been great and unreasonable equality, and some would have arrived to honors they were little able to bear. But having so clearly explained your most excellent motives, worshipful Heinrich, wilt condescend to lighten the march by an application of its truth to the enterprise on which we go forth?"

"That may be done readily, for no tower in the Palatinate is more obvious. Here is Limburg, and yon is Duerckheim; rival communities, as it were, in interests and hopes, and of necessity but little disposed to do each other favor. Nature, which is a great master of all questions of right and wrong, sayeth that Duerckheim shall not harm Limburg, nor Limburg. Duerckheim.—Is this clear?"

"Himmel! as the flame of a furnace, honorable Burgo-master."

"Now, it being thus settled, that there shall be no interference in each other's concerns, we yield to necessity,

and go forth armed in order to prevent Limburg doing wrong to a principle that all just men admit to be inviolable. You perceive the nicety; we confess that what we do is weak in argument, and the greater need it should be strong in execution. We are no madcaps to unsettle a principle to gain our ends, but then all must have heed to their interests, and what we do is with a reserve of doctrine."

"This relieves my soul from a mountain!" exclaimed the smith, who had listened with a sort of earnestness that denotes honesty of purpose; "naught can be more just, and woe to him that shall gainsay it, while back of mine carries harness!"

In this manner did Heinrich and his lieutenant lighten the way by subtle discourse, and by arguments that we feel some consciousness may subject us to the imputation of plagiarisms, but for which we can vouch as genuine, on the authority of Christian Kinzel, already so often named.

The high and disinterested intellect that is active in regulating the interests of the world has been so often alluded to, in other places and on different occasions, that it is quite useless to expatiate on it here. We have already said, that Heinrich Frey was a stout friend of the conservative principle, which, reduced to practice, means little more than that

"They shall get, who have the power,
And they shall keep, who can."

Justice, like liberality, has great reservations, and perhaps there are few countries in the present advanced condition of the human species, that does not daily employ some philosophy of the same involved character as this of Heinrich, supported by reasoning as lucid, irresistible, and nervous.

The direction in which the band of Duerckheimers proceeded, led them by a tortuous way, it is true, but surely, to the side of the valley on which the castle of Hartenburg stood. Heinrich, however, brought his followers to a halt long before they had made the circuit which would have been necessary to reach the hold of Count Emich. The place he chose for the collection and review of the band, was about midway between Duerckheim and the castle, pursuing a line that conformed to the sinuosities and variations of the foot of the mountain. It was in an open grove,

where the shadows of the trees effectually concealed the presence of the unusual company. Here refreshments were taken by all, for the good people of the town were much addicted to practices of this consolatory nature, and the occasion must have been doubly urgent that could induce them to overlook the calls of the appetite.

"Seest thou aught of our allies, honest smith?" demanded Heinrich of his lieutenant, who had been sent a short distance along the brow of the hill to reconnoitre. "It were unseemly in men so trained as our friends, to be lacking at need."

"Doubt them not, Master Heinrich. I know the knaves well; they merely tarry to lighten their packs by the way, in consumptions like this of our own. Dost see the manner in which the Benedictines affect tranquillity, worshipful Burgomaster?"

"'Tis their usual ghostly hypocrisy, brave Dietrich; but we shall uncloak them! Good will come of our enterprise, for, of a truth, by this spirit on our part, which shall for ever demonstrate the necessity of not meddling in the concerns of a neighbor, we settle all uncertainties between us. By the Kings of Koeln! is it to be tolerated, that a gownsman shall hoodwink a townsman to the day of judgment?—Is there not a light in the Abbey-chapel?"

"The reverend fathers pray against their enemies. Dost think, worshipful Burgomaster, that the tale concerning the manner in which those heavy stones were carried upon Limburg hill, has received small additions by oft telling?"

"It may be thus, Dietrich; for naught, unless it may be damp snow, gaineth more by repeated rolling, than your story."

"And gold," rejoined the smith, chuckling in a manner not to displease his superior, since it palpably intimated the idea he entertained of the Burgomaster's success in accumulating money, an idea that is always pleasant to those who deem prosperity of this nature to be the principal end of life—"Gold well rolled increases marvellously! I am of your mind, Master Heinrich; for to speak truth, I much question whether the Evil Spirit would have troubled himself with so light an affair as carrying the smaller materials a foot.—As to the heavy columns, and the hewn key-stones, with other loads of weight, it was so much beneath his character, and may be considered as

probable. I have never contradicted that part of the legend, for it hath likelihood to back it, but—ha! here cometh the succor.”

The approach of a band of men, who came from the direction of Hartenburg, always keeping along the margin of the hills, and within the shadows, absorbed all attention. This second party was treble the force of the townsmen, like them it was armed, and, like them, it showed every sign of military preparation. When it had halted, which it did at a little distance from the band of Heinrich, as if it were not deemed advisable to blend the two bodies in one, a warrior advanced to the spot where the Burgomaster had taken post. The new comer was well but lightly armed, wearing head-piece and harness, and carrying his sword at rest.

“Who leadeth the Duerckheimers!” he demanded, when near enough to trust his voice.

“Their poor Burgomaster, in person; would there had been a better for the duty!”

“Welcome, worshipful sir,” said the other, bowing with more than usual respect. “In my turn, I come at the head of Count Emich’s followers.”

“How art thou styled, brave captain?”

“’Tis a name but little worthy to be classed with yours, Herr Frey. But such as it is, I disown it not. I am Berchthold Hintermayer.”

“Umph!—A young leader for so grave an enterprise!—I had hoped for the honor of thy lord’s company.”

“I am commanded to explain this matter to your worship.” Berchthold then walked aside with the Burgomaster, while Dietrich proceeded to take a nearer view of the allied force.

It is well known to most of our readers, that every baron of note, at the time of which we write, entertained more or fewer dependants, who, succeeding to the regularly banded vassals of the earlier ages, held a sort of middle station between the servitor and the soldier. There stands a noble ruin, called Pierrefont, within a day’s ride of Paris, and on the very verge of a royal forest,—a forest that in some of its features approaches nearer to an American wood than any we have yet met in the other hemisphere—which castle of Pierrefont is known to have been the hold of one of these warlike nobles, who did many and manifest wrongs to the lieges of the king, even in an age

considerably later than this of our tale. In short, European society, just then, was in the state of transition, beginning to reject the trammels of feudalism, and struggling to wear its bonds, at least in a new and less troublesome form. But the importance and political authority of the Counts of Leiningen fully entitled them to preserve a train that barons of lesser note were beginning to abandon, and consequently all of their castles had many of these loose followers, who have since been entirely superseded by the regularly embodied and trained troops of our own time.

The smith found much to approve, and something to censure, in the party that Berchthold had led to their support. So far as recklessness of character and object, audacity in acts, and indifference to moral checks, were concerned, a better troop could not have been desired, for more than half of them were men who lived by the excesses of the community, occupying exactly that position in the social scale that fungi do in the vegetable, or that sores and blotches fill in the physical economy of the species. But in respect to thews and sinews, a primary consideration with the smith in estimating the value of every man he saw, they were much inferior, as a body, to the townsmen, in whom orderly living, gainful and regular industry, had permitted the animal to become developed. There was, however, a band of peasants, drawn from among the mountains, or inhabitants of the hamlet beneath the castle walls, who, though less menacing in air, and bold of speech, were youths that Dietrich thought only required the Duerckheim training to become heroes.

When Heinrich and Berchthold rejoined their respective followers, after the private discourse, all discontent was banished from the former's brow, and both immediately occupied themselves in making the dispositions necessary to the success of the common enterprise. The wood, in which they had halted, lay directly opposite to the inner extremity of the Abbey hill, from which it was separated by a broad and perfectly even meadow. The distance, though not great, was sufficient to render it probable, that the approach of the invaders would be seen by some of the sentinels, who, there was little doubt, the men-at-arms, lent by the Elector to the monks, maintained, were it only for their own security. Limburg was not a fortress, its impunity being due altogether to the moral power that the

Church, to which it belonged, still wielded, though it were so much weakened in that part of Germany; but its walls were high and solid, its towers numerous, its edifices massive, and all was so disposed that a body within, resolutely bent on resistance, might well have set at defiance a force like that which now came against it.

Of all these truths Heinrich was sensible, for he had shown courage and gained experience in the defence of places, during a life that was now past its meridian, and which had been necessarily spent amid the tumults and contentions of that troubled age. He looked about him, therefore, with greater seriousness, in order to ascertain on whom he might rely, and the fine and collected deportment of Berchthold Hintermayer gave him that sort of satisfaction which brave men feel by communion with kindred spirits in the moment of danger. When every necessary disposition was made, the party advanced, moving deliberately to preserve their order, and conscious that breath would be necessary in mounting the steep acclivity.

Perhaps there is no time in which the ingenuity of man is more active, than in those moments when he has a sensitive consciousness of being wrong, and consequently a feverish desire to vindicate his works or acts to himself, as well as to others. A deep conviction of truth, and the certainty of being right, fortifies the mind with a high moral dignity, that even disinclines it to the humility of vindication. Thus he who rushes from a dispute in which his own convictions cause him to distrust his own arguments, into rash and general asseverations, betrays the goadings of conscience rather than spirit, and weakens the very cause that it may be his wish to establish. An arrogant assumption of knowledge, especially in matters that our previous habits and education rather disqualify than teach us to comprehend, can only lead to contradiction and detection; and although circumstances may lend a momentary and fallacious support to error, the triumph of truth is as certain as its punishments are severe. Happily, this is an age, in which no sophistry can long escape unscathed, nor any injury to natural justice go long unrequited. No matter where the wrong to truth has been committed—on the throne, or in the cabinet, in the senate, or by means of the press—society is certain to avenge itself for the deceptions of which it has been the dupe, and its final judg-

ments are recorded on that opinion which lasts long after the specious triumphs of the plausible are forgotten. It were well that they who abuse their situations, by a reckless disregard of consequences, in order to obtain a momentary object, oftener remembered this fact, for they would spare themselves the mortification, and in some cases the infamy, that is so sure to rest on him who disregards right to attain an end.

Heinrich Frey greatly distrusted the lawfulness of the enterprise in which he was engaged ; for, unlike his companions, he had the responsibility of advising, as well as that of execution, on his head. He had, therefore, a restless wish to find reasons of justification for what he did ; and as he marched slowly across the meadows, with Berchthold and the smith at his side, his tongue gave utterance to his thoughts.

"There cannot be any manner of doubt of the necessity and justice of what we do to Limburg, Master Hintermayer," he said ; for men usually affirm in all dubious cases with a confidence precisely in an inverse ratio to the distrust they feel of the rectitude of their cause :—"else why are we here ? Is Limburg forever to trouble the valley and the plain, with its accursed exactions and avarice, or are we slaves for shaven monks to trample on ?"

"There are sufficient reasons, of a truth, for what we do, Herr Burgomaster," answered Berchthold, whose mind had taken a strong bias to the new change in religious opinions, that were then fast gaining ground. "When we have so good motives, let us look no farther."

"Nay, young man, I am certain that the honest smith here will say, no nail that he drives into a hoof can be too well clenched."

"That fact is out of all question, Master Berchthold," answered Dietrich, "and therefore must his worship be right in the whole argument."

"Let it be so ; I shall never gainsay the necessity of breaking up a nest of drones."

"I call them not drones, young Berchthold, nor do I come to break them up ; but simply to show the world, that he who would deal with the affairs of Duerckheim, hath need of a lesson to teach him not to enter his neighbor's grounds."

"This is wholesome, and will bring great credit on our town !" responded the smith. "The more the pity that

we do not press the same matter home upon the Elector too, who hath of late raised new pretensions to our earnings."

"With the Elector the affair may not be discussed, for his interference is of too strong a quality to call upon our manhood in maintaining the right of non-interference. These subtle questions of law are not to be learned over a furnace, but need nice capacities to render them clear; but clear they are,—to all who have the power to understand them. It is more than probable, that to thee, Dietrich, they are not so manifest; but wert thou one of the town council, thou shouldst look into the question with different eyes."

"That I doubt not, honorable Heinrich, that I doubt not. Could but such an honor light on one of my name and breeding—Himmel! the worshipful council should find a man ready to believe any nicety of this sort, or indeed of any other sort!"

"Ha! There is a light at yonder loop!" exclaimed Berchthold. "This bodes well."

"Hast a friend in the Abbey?"

"Go to, Herr Burgomaster—This touches on excommunication;—but I much like yon light at the loop!"

"Let there be silence," whispered Heinrich to those in his rear, who passed the order to their fellows. "We draw near."

The party was now at the foot of the hill. Not a sign of their approach being known had yet met them; unless a single taper placed at a dungeon-loop could thus be interpreted. On the contrary, the stillness already described in the approach of Ulrike, reigned over the whole of the vast pile. But, neither Heinrich nor his companion liked this fearful quiet, for it boded a defence the more serious when it did come. They would have greatly preferred an open resistance, and nothing would have more relieved the minds of the two leaders, than to have been able to command a rush, under a hot discharge from the arquebusiers of Duke Friedrich. But this relief was refused them, and the whole band reached a point of the hill, under a flanking tower, where it became necessary to abandon all idea of cover, and to make a swift movement, to gain the road. It was the rush of this evolution which first disturbed the monks in the chapel. The second interruption proceeded from the ruder sounds of the assault, that immediately after was made upon the outer gate, itself,

CHAPTER XIX.

“I'll never
Be such a ghostling to obey instinct, but stand
As if a man were author of himself,
And knew no other line.”—*Coriolanus*.

THE assailants, as has been seen, were led by the Burgo master, and his two lieutenants, Berchthold and the smith. Close at the heels of the latter followed three of his own journeymen, each, like his master, armed with a massive sledge. No sooner did the party reach the gate, than these artisans commenced the duty of pioneers, with great readiness and skill. At the third blow, from Dietrich's brawny arm, the gate flew open, and those in front rushed into the court.

“Who art thou?” cried Berchthold, seizing a man who knelt with a knee on another's breast, immediately across his passage; “speak, for this is not a moment of trifling!”

“Master Forester, be less hot, and remember thy friends. Dost not see it is Gottlob, that holdeth the convent porter, lest the knave should use the additional bars? There are strangers within, and, to consult his ease, the faithless varlet hath not done his fastenings properly, else mightest thou have pounded till Duke Friedrich's men were upon thee.”

“Bravely done, foster-brother! Thy signal was seen and counted on; but, since thou knowest the ways so well, lead on, at once, against the men-at-arms.”

“Himmel! The rogues have bristly beards, well grizzled with war, and may not like to have their sleep thus suddenly broken; but service must be done—Choose the most godly of thy followers, worshipful Burgomaster, to go against the monks, who are fortified in their choir, and well armed with prayer; while I will lead the more carnal to another sort of work against the Elector's people.”

While this short dialogue had place, the whole of the assailants poured through the gate, their officers endeavoring to maintain something like order among the ill-trained band. All felt the imperious necessity of first disposing of the troops; for as respects the monks themselves, there was certainly no cause of immediate apprehension. A few

were left, therefore, to guard the gate, while Heinrich, guided by the cow-herd, led his followers toward the buildings where the men-at-arms were known to lodge.

If we were to say that the party advanced to this attack without concern, we should overrate their valor, and do the reputation of the Elector's men injustice. There was sacrilege in the invasion of the convent, according to the predominant opinions of the age; for though Protestantism had made great progress, even reformers had grievous doubts in severing the bonds of habit and long-established prejudices. To this lurking sentiment was added the unaccountable silence that still reigned among the men-at-arms, who, as Gottlob had said, were known to be excellent soldiers at need. They lay in the rear of the Abbot's dwelling, and were sufficiently intrenched behind walls, and among the gardens, to make a fierce resistance.

But all these considerations rather flashed upon the minds of the leaders, than they were maturely weighed. In the moment of assault there is little leisure for thought, especially when the affair gets to be as far advanced as this we are now describing. The men rushed toward the point of attack, accordingly, beset by misgivings rather than entertaining any very clear ideas of the dangers they ran.

Gottlob had evidently made the best of the time he had been at liberty in the Abbey, to render himself master of the intricate windings of the different passages. He was soon at the door of the Abbot's abode, which was dashed into splinters by a single blow of Dietrich's sledge, when there poured a stream of reckless, and we may add lawless, soldiery through the empty apartments. In another moment, the whole of the assailants were in the grounds, in the rear of this portion of the dwellings.

As there is nothing that more powerfully rebukes violence than a calm firmness, so is there nothing so appalling to or so likely to repulse an assault, as a coolness that seems to set the onset at defiance. In such moments, the imagination is apt to become more formidable than the missiles of an enemy; conjuring dangers in the place of those which, in the ordinary course of warfare, might be lightly estimated, were they seen. Every one knows that the moment which precedes the shock of battle is by far the most trying to the constancy of man, and a reservation of the means of resistance is prolonging that moment, and of course increasing its influence.

Every man among the hostile band, even to the leaders, felt the influence of this mysterious quiet among the troops of the Elector. So imposing in fact did it become, that they halted in a group, a position of all others most likely to expose them to defeat,—and there was a low rumor of mines and ambuscades.

Berchthold perceived that the moment was critical, and that there was imminent danger of defeat.

“Follow !” he cried, waving his sword, and springing toward the silent buildings in which it was known the men-at-arms were quartered. He was valiantly seconded by the Burgomaster and the smith, when the whole party resumed its courage, and advanced tumultuously against the doors and windows. The sounds of the sledges and the yielding of bars and bolts came next ; after which the rush penetrated to the interior. The cries of the assailants rang among empty vaults. There was the straw, the remnants of food, the odor of past debauches, and all the usual disgusting signs of ill-regulated barracks ; for in that day, neatness and method did not descend far below the condition of the affluent ; but no cry answered cry, no sword or arquebuse was raised to meet the blow of the invader. Stupor was the first feeling, on gaining the knowledge of this important fact. Then Heinrich and Berchthold both issued orders to bring the captured porter, who was in the centre of the assailants, before them.

“Explain this,” said the Burgomaster, authoritatively ; “what hath become of Duke Friedrich’s followers ?”

“They departed at the turn of the night, worshipful Herr, leaving Limburg to the care of its patron saint.”

“Gone ! whither, and in what manner ?—If thou deceivest me, knave, thy saint Benedict himself shall not save thee from a flaying !”

“I pray you be not angered, great magistrate, for I say nothing but truth. There came an order from the Elector, as the sun set, recalling his meanest warrior ; for, it is said, he is sore pressed, and hath great need of succor.”

The silence which followed this explanation was succeeded by a shout, and individuals began to steal eagerly away from the main body, bent on their own designs of pillage.

“What road took the Duke’s men ?”

“Worshipful Heinrich, they went down by the horse-

path, in great secrecy and order, and passed up the opposite mountain, in order to escape troubling the townsmen to open the gates at that late hour. It was their intention to cross the cedars of the Heidenmauer, and, descending on the other side of the camp, to gain the plain in the rear of Duerckheim."

There no longer remained a doubt that the conquest was achieved, and the entire party broke off in bands; some to execute their private orders, and others, like those who had already proved delinquent, to look after their own particular interests.

Until this moment not a solitary straggler had gone near the chapel. As it was not the wish of those who had planned the assault to do personal injury to any of the fraternity, the orders had been so worded as to leave this portion of the Abbey for a time unvisited, in the expectation that the monks would profit by the omission, to escape by some of the many private posterns that communicated with the cloisters. But, as there no longer was an armed enemy to subdue, it now became necessary to think of the fraternity. The process of sacking their dormitories was already far advanced, and the bursts of exultation that began to issue from the buildings, announced that the rich and commodious dwelling of the Abbot himself was undergoing a similar summary process.

"Himmel!" muttered Gottlob, who from the moment of his liberation had not quitted the side of his foster-brother; "our castle rogues are taking deep looks into the books of the most reverend Bonifacius, Master Berchthold! It were good to tell them which are Latin, at least, lest they burthen their shoulders with learning they can never use."

"Let the knaves plunder," replied Heinrich, gruffly; "as much evil as good hath come from that store of letters, and it will be all the better for Duerckheim, were the damnable ammunition of the Benedictines a little less plenty. There are those on the plains who doubt that necromancy is bound up in some of the volumes that bear a saint's name on their backs."

Perhaps Berchthold might have remonstrated, had not his instinct told him, that remonstrance on such a subject, in that moment of riot and confusion, would have been worse than useless. The consequence was, that valuable works and numerous manuscripts, which had been col-

lected during centuries of learned ease, were abandoned to the humor of men incapable of estimating their value, or even of understanding their objects.

"Let us to the monks," said Heinrich, sheathing his heavy blade, for the first time since they had quitted the wood. "Friend smith, thou wilt look to the duties here, and see that what is done is done thoroughly. Remember that thy metal is well heated, and on the anvil, waiting thy pleasure ; it must be beaten flat, lest at another day it be remoulded into a weapon to do us harm. Go to, Dietrich ; thou knowest what we of the town would have, and what we expect of thy skill."

Taking Berchthold by the arm, the Burgomaster led the way toward that far-famed pile, the Abbey-church. They were followed by a body of some twenty chosen artisans, who, throughout the whole of that eventful night, kept close to the two leaders, like men who had been selected for this particular duty.

The same ominous silence reigned around the chapel as had rendered the approach to the quarters of the men-at-arms imposing. But here the invaders went against a different enemy. With most then living, the mysterious power of the Church still possessed a deep and fearful interest. Dissenters had spoken boldly, and the current of public opinion had begun to set strongly against the Romish Church, in all that region, it is true ; but it is not easy to eradicate by the mere efforts of reason, the deep roots that are thrown out by habit and sentiment. At this very hour, we see nearly the entire civilized world committing gross and evident wrongs, and justifying its acts, if we look closely into its philosophy, on a plea little better than that of a sickly taste formed by practices which in themselves cannot be plausibly vindicated. The very vicious effects of every system are quoted as arguments in favor of its continuance ; for change is thought to be, and sometimes is, a greater evil than the existing wrong ; and men, in millions, are doomed to continue degraded, ignorant, and brutal, simply because vicious opinions refuse all sympathy with those whose hopeless lot it has been to have fallen, by the adventitious chances of life, beneath the ban of society. In this manner does error beget error, until even philosophy and justice are satisfied with making abortive attempts to palliate a disease that a bolder and better practice might radically cure. It will not occasion

surprise, therefore, when we say, that both Heinrich and Berchthold had heavy misgivings concerning the merit of their enterprise, as they drew near the church. Perhaps no man ever much preceded his age, without at moments distrusting his own principles; and it is certain, that Luther himself was often obliged to wrestle with harassing doubts. Berchthold was less troubled, however, than his companion, for he acted under the orders of a superior, and was both younger and better taught than the Burgo-master. The first of these facts was sufficient of itself, under his habits, to remove a load of responsibility from his shoulders, while the latter not only weakened the influence of previous opinions, but caused those which he adopted to be well fortified. In short, there existed between Heinrich and Berchthold that sort of difference which all must have remarked, in the advancing age in which we live, between him who has inherited his ideas from generations that have passed, and him who obtains them from his contemporaries. The young Forester had grown into manhood since the voice of the Reformer was first heard in Germany, and as it happened to be his lot to dwell among those who listened to the new opinions, he had imbibed most of their motives of dissent, without ever having been much subject to the counteracting influence of an opposite persuasion. It is in this gradual manner, that nearly all salutary moral changes are effected, since they who first entertain them, are rarely able to do more, in their generation, than to check the progress of habit; while the duty of causing the current to flow backward, and to take a new direction, devolves on their successors.

In believing that Wilhelm of Venloo would be foremost in deserting his post, in this moment of outrage and tumult, the authors of the assault did him injustice. Though little likely to incur the hazards, or to covet the honors of martyrdom, the masculine mind of the Abbot elevated him altogether above the influence of any very abject passion; and if he had not self-command to curtail the appetites, he had a dignity of intellect which rarely deserts the mentally-gifted in situations of difficulty. When Heinrich and Berchthold, therefore, entered the church, they found the entire community in the choir remaining, like Roman senators, to receive the blow in their collective and official character. There might have been artifice, as well as mag-

nanimity, in the resolution which had decided Bonifacius to adopt this course ; for, coming as they did from the scene of brutal violence without, those who entered the church were much impressed by the quiet solemnity which met them.

The candles still burned before the altar, the lamps threw their flickering light on the quaint architecture and the gorgeous ornaments of the chapel, while every pale face and shaven head beneath, looked like some consecrated watchman, placed near the shrine to protect it from pollution. Each monk was in his stall, with the exception of the Prior and Father Johan, who had stationed themselves on the steps of the altar ; the first as the officiating priest of the late mass, and the latter under an impulse of his governing and natural exaggeration, which moved him to throw his person as a shield before the vessel that contained the Host. The Abbot was on his throne, motionless, indisposed to yield, and haughty, though with features that betrayed great and condensed passion.

The Burgomaster and Berchthold advanced into the choir alone, for their followers remained in the body of the church, in obedience to a sign from the former. Both were uncovered, and while they walked slowly up the choir, scarce a head moved. Every eye seemed riveted, by a common spell, on the crucifix of precious stones and ivory that stood upon the altar. The blood of Heinrich crept under the influence of this solemn calm, and by the time he had reached the steps, where he stood confronted equally to the Abbot and the Prior, for the former of whom he had quite as much fear as hatred, and for the latter an unfeigned love and reverence, the resolution of the honest Burgomaster was sensibly weakened.

"Who art thou ?" demanded Bonifacius, admirably timing his question, by the indecision and the quailing eye of him he addressed.

"By St. Benedict ! my face is no such stranger in Limburg that you put this question, most holy Abbot," answered Heinrich, making an effort to imitate the other's composure, that was very sensible to himself, but better concealed from others ; "though not shaven and blessed, like a monk, I am one well known to most that dwell in or near Duerckheim !"

"I had better said, '*What* art thou ?' Thy name and office are known to me, Heinrich Frey ; but in what char-

acter dost thou now presume to enter Limburg church, and to show this want of reverence to our altars?"

"To speak thee fairly, reverend Bonifacius, 'tis in the character of the head-man of Duerckheim, a much-injured and long-abused town, that is tired of monkish exactions and monkish pride, and which hath at length assumed the office of doing itself justice, that I appear. We are here to-night, not as peaceful citizens bent on prayers and hymn-singing, but armed, as thou seest, and bold in the intention to do away a nuisance from the neighborhood forever."

"Thy words are as little friendly as thy guise, and what thou sayest here but too well answers to that which thy rude followers perform beyond the walls of this consecrated spot. Hast thou well pondered on this bold step of thy town, Herr Heinrich?"

"If often pondering be well pondering, it hath been before us, Bonifacius, at different meetings, and in various discussions, any time this year past."

"And hast thou no dread of Rome?"

"That is an authority which lessens daily in this region, holy Benedictine. Not to deal doubly by thee, of the two we have most distrusted the anger of Duke Friedrich; but that fear is diminished by the certainty that he hath so much on his hands just now that his thoughts cannot easily turn to other affairs. We did not know, in sooth, that he had recalled his men-at-arms, but had counted on some angry discussion with those obstinate warriors; and thou wilt easily comprehend that their absence hath, in no manner, lessened our faith in our own cause."

"The Elector may regain his power, when a day of reckoning will come for those who have dared to profit by his present distress."

"We are traders and artisans, good Bonifacius, and have made our estimates with some nicety. If the Abbey must be paid for—an event by no means certain—we shall count the bargain profitable so long as it cannot be rebuilt. Brother Luther, we think, is laying a corner-stone that will prevent the devil from ever attempting to set up that which we now propose to throw down."

"This is thy final answer, Burgomaster?"

"Nay, I say not that, Abbot. Send in thy terms to the town-council to-morrow, and, if we can entertain them, it may happen that a present accommodation shall stop all

further claims. But what has here been so happily commenced, must be as happily finished."

"Then before I quit these holy walls, hearken to my malediction," returned Bonifacius, rising with priestly and practised dignity ;—"on thee and on thy town—on all that call thee magistrate—parent——"

"Stay the dreadful words!" cried a piercing female voice from among the columns behind the choir. "Reverend and holy Abbot, have mercy!" added Ulrike, pale, trembling, and shaken equally with horror and alarm, though her eye was bright and wild, like that of one sustained by more than human purpose: "Holy Priest, forbear! He knows not what he does. Madness hath seized on him and on the town. They are but tools in the hands of one more powerful than they."

At the appearance of Ulrike, Bonifacius resumed his seat, disposed to await the effect of her appeal.

"Thou here!" said Heinrich, regarding his wife with surprise, but entirely without anger or suspicion.

"Happily here, to avert this fearful crime from thee and thy household."

"I had thought thee at thy prayers with the poor Herr von Ritterstein, in his comfortless hermitage of the Heidenmauer!"

"And canst thou think of the deed which hath driven the Herr Odo to this penitence and suffering, and stand here armed and desperate! Thou seest that years do not suffice to relieve a soul on which the weight of sacrilege rests; oh! hadst thou been with me, to witness the agony that preyed upon poor Odo, as he knelt at yonder step, listening to the mass that hath this night been said in his behalf, thou mightest better know how deep is the wound made on the heart that hath been seared by God's anger!"

"This is most strange!" rejoined the wondering Burgo-master; "that those whom I had hoped well disposed of, and that in a manner neither to suspect nor to trouble our enterprise, should cross us at the moment when all is so near completion! Sapperment! young Berchthold, thou seest in what manner matrimony clogs the stoutest of us, though girded with the sword."

"And thou, Berchthold Hintermayer, son of my dearest friend—child of my fondest hope,—thou comest, too, on this unholy errand, like the midnight robber, stealing upon the unarmed and consecrated!"

"None love, or none reverence thee, more than I, Madame Ulrike," answered the youth, bowing with sincere respect; "but wert thou to address thy speech to the Heri Heinrich, it would go at once to him who directs our movements."

"Then on thee, Burgomaster, will be thrown the heaviest load of Heaven's displeasure, as on the leader of the outrage. What matters it that the Benedictines are grasping, or overweening in their respect for themselves, or that some among them have forgotten their vows? Is not this temple devoted to God? Are not these His altars, before which thou hast dared to come, with a hostile heart and an angry purpose?"

"Go to, good Ulrike," returned Heinrich, saluting the cold but ever handsome cheek of his wife, who leaned her head on his shoulder to recall her faculties, while she firmly held his hand with both her own, as if to stay his acts; "Go to, thou art excellent in thy way, but what can thy sex know of policy? This matter hath been had up before many councils; and—by my beard!—tongue of woman cannot shake the resolutions of Duerckheim. Go, depart with thy nurse, and leave us to do our pleasure."

"Is it thy pleasure, Heinrich, to brave Heaven? Dost thou not know, that the crimes of the parent are visited on the child—that the wrong done to-day, however we may triumph in present success, is sure to revisit us in the dread shape of punishment? Were there no other power than conscience, so long as that fearful scourge remains on earth, 'tis vain to expect immunity. Dost thou owe all to thy Duerckheim council and its selfish policy? Hast thou forgotten the hour that my pious parents gave thee my hand, and the manner in which thou then plighted thy faith to protect me and mine, to assume the place of these departed friends, to be father, and mother, and husband, to her thou took to thy bosom? Is Meta—that child of our mutual esteem—naught, that thou trifled with her peace and hopes? Lay aside, then, these hasty intentions, and turn thy mind to thine own abode; bethink thee of those whom nature and the law condemn to suffer for thy faults, or to whom both have given the dearer right to rejoice in thy clemency and mercy."

"Was ever woman so bent on crossing the noble duties of man!" said the Burgomaster, who, spite of himself, had been sensibly moved by this hasty and comprehensive

picture of his domestic duties, and who was greatly troubled to find the means of extricating himself from the position in which he stood.—“Thou art better in thy chamber, good Ulrike. Meta will hear of this onset, and have her fears.—Go then, and calm the child; thou shalt have such escort as becometh my quality and thy deserts.”

“Berchthold, I make the last appeal to thee. This cruel father, this negligent husband, is too madly bent on his council, and on the wild policy of the town, to remember God! But thou hast young hopes, and sentiments that become thy years and virtue. Dost think, rash boy, that one like Meta will dare trust the last chance of happiness to a participator in this crime, when such an inheritance of guilt will be the portion that shall descend from her own father?”

A stir among the monks, who had hitherto listened with an attention that vacillated between hope and fear, interrupted the answers of the wavering Burgomaster and his young companion. The movement was caused by the entrance of the group, which, until now, had stood aloof in the obscurity of the great aisle, but which seized the moment of doubt to advance into the centre of the choir. One, closely muffled, walked from out its centre, and throwing aside the cloak that had concealed his form, showed the armed person of Emich of Leiningen. The moment Ulrike recognized the unbending eye of the Baron, she buried her face in her hands, and quitted the place. She went not unattended, however, for both her husband and Berchthold followed anxiously; nor did either return to the work of the night, until he had seen the heart-stricken wife and mother under the protection of a well-chosen company of the townsmen.

CHAPTER XX.

“He, who the sword of heaven will bear,
Should be as holy as severe—” *Measure for Measure.*

THE first glances between Emich and Bonifacius were filled with those passions which each had so long dissembled, and of which the reader has already had glimps

ses during the more unguarded moments of the recent debauch. In the eyes of the Count, triumph mingled with hatred ; while there still remained a slight covering of artifice and caution about the lineaments of the Abbot, masks that he scarcely thought it yet expedient to throw entirely aside.

"We owe this visit, then, to thee, Herr Emich?" said the latter, struggling to appear calm.

"And to thine own desert, most holy Bonifacius."

"What wouldst thou, audacious Baron?"

"Peace in this oft-violated valley—humility in shaven crowns—religion without hypocrisy—and mine own."

"I will not talk to thee of Heaven, bold man, for the word were blasphemy in such a presence ; but thou art not yet so lost to worldly policy as to overlook the punishment of the empire. Hast thou well counted thy gold, and art thou sure thy coffers are sufficiently stored to rebuild the sainted pile which thy hand would fain destroy—or dost think thy riches can replace all that pious princes have here bestowed, during ages in which the Church hath been duly revered?"

"As to thy vessels and precious stones, reverend Abbot, it shall be my heed to preserve them to meet this demand, which haply may never be made ; and as to the cost of rebuilding the Abbey, why, the same notable workman that helped first to set it up, will owe me a good turn for punishing those that outwitted him, and sent him away without the promised boon of souls. Though, God's truth ! were the fact fairly dived into, I am of opinion that Limburg, after all, hath sent more customers to his furnaces than all the drinking-inns and pot-houses of the Palatinate !"

This sally of their lord produced a general and deriding laugh among his followers, who now began to flock into the church from other parts of the Abbey, with the expectation that there was rich plunder to be had in the sanctuary. It was about this time, too, that a brand was cast among the straw of the barracks, and the strong light which glared through the stained windows very effectually told the monks of the inefficiency of further remonstrances.

Notwithstanding his known licentiousness, and the general freedom of his life, the Abbot had imbibed from the high objects of his calling, by that secret process that ren-

ders even the least deserving in some measure subject to the influence of their professions, a cast of dignity, and perhaps we might add even of sincerity (for there is often a strange admixture of inherent faith and practical unbelief about the dissolute) that caused him frequently to rise to the level of his most solemn duties. A character strong and masculine as his could not be aroused without displaying some of its latent energies, be it for good or be it for evil; and Emich had doubts of the result when he witnessed the manner in which his enemy succeeded in repressing his fierce resentment, and the expression of clerical dignity and official calmness that reigned in his countenance. The Abbot arose, like a prelate in the undisturbed exercise of his functions, and raising his voice, so as to send his words to the deepest recesses of the chapel, he spoke after the manner of the peculiar rites of the Church he served.

"God, in his hidden wisdom, hath permitted to the wicked a momentary triumph," he said; "we search not now into the reasons of this mysterious dispensation; the truth will be known in His own time:—but, as servitors of the altar—as guardians of this holy sanctuary—as the sworn and professed of Heaven—as one consecrated and blessed—there remaineth a solemn, an imperative duty to perform."

"Bonifacius, beware!" interrupted the Count of Leiningen; "thou dealest not now with burgomasters and weeping wives."

"In the behalf, then, of that God to whom this shrine hath been raised," continued the unmoved Abbot, "in His holy interest, and in His holy name——"

"At thy peril, priest!" and Emich shook, partly in anger, and partly in a terror he could scarce explain.

"As his unworthy but necessary minister—as consecrated and blessed—gifted with the power by the head of the Church, and now required to use it, do I pronounce thee——"

"Where are ye, followers of Hartenburg? Down with the silly maledictions of this mad monk; remember ye are not trembling women, to need a Benedictine's blessing!"

The voice of Emich was drowned, as well as that of the Abbot, by the noises that were now raised in the chapel. The first interruption came from a long dark instrument, that was thrust from out of the aisle behind the throne of

Bonifacius, and within a few feet of his head; an interruption that filled the whole edifice with the wild, plaintive strains of the mountains.

This signal, which came from the cherry-wood trumpet of Gottlob, who rarely went abroad without this badge of his profession, was immediately followed by a general shout from the band of the Count, and by a variety of similar sounds, that were raised by different instruments that had hitherto been mute. The effect of these shrill strains, echoing among the vaulted and fretted roofs, which were brightly illuminated by the growing and fierce light that now pervaded the church, and of the seeming calm of the Abbot, who ended his malediction, spite of the uproar, is left to the reader's imagination. When he had finished the unheard curse, Bonifacius looked about him in gloomy observation.

It was evident to his cool and instructed mind, which was far too earthly in its habits to cling to any hopes of a merely spiritual nature, that the outrage had already gone so far, as to render it more hazardous to his enemy to retreat than to advance. Signing to the community, he descended slowly, and with dignity, from his throne, and led the way from the choir. The ready monks obeyed, the fraternity walking from that extraordinary scene, in their customary silent order. Emich followed the dark procession with a troubled eye, for even the conqueror regards the calm retreat of his foes with uneasiness, and there was an instant of painful distrust of his own purpose, as the last flowing robe vanished through a private door that led to a secret postern, by which the routed Benedictines quitted a mountain, where they had so long dwelt in the calm, and, we might add, in the ease, of an affluent and privileged seclusion.

The invaders of the Abbey took this open abandonment of the place by its ancient possessors, to be an unequivocal admission of their triumph. There is no moment so likely to produce excesses as that in which the uncertainty of strife is changed to the certainty of victory. The feelings seem willing to avenge themselves for all their previous doubts, and man is ever too ready to ascribe his successes to some inherent qualities, which give him an apparent right to abuse any advantages that may happen to be their consequence. The band of the castle and the people of the town, among whom a large proportion had to the last dis-

trusted the presence of the community, to which vulgar opinion attributed the power of working miracles, no sooner found themselves, as they believed, in undisputed possession of the mountain, than the reaction of feeling, to which there has just been allusion, urged them to increase their violence, and to redouble those efforts which had momentarily been checked.

A shout of triumph was the common signal for renewing the assault. It was followed by the crashing of windows, and the overthrow of every fixture in the body of the church that was not too solid to resist their first and ill-directed efforts, and a general mutilation of the monuments and labored statuary. Marble cherubs fell on every side, wings and limbs of angels separated from the trunks, and the grave and bearded visages of many an honored saint were doomed to endure contumely and fractures. Even the inferior altars were no longer respected, but they and their decorations were ruthlessly scattered, as if the enmity of the conquerors was transferred from those who had administered at them, to the dreaded Being in whose name the rites had been celebrated.

The reader will imagine the confusion and tumult that attended a scene like this. During the uproar, Emich buried his face in his mantle, and paced to and fro in the choir, which his presence, and perhaps some lingering reverence for the sacred spot, still preserved from violence. He was joined only by the Burgomaster and Berchthold, the remainder of the party having mingled with those who were destroying the chapels and decorations of the church. Heinrich seated himself in one of the vacant stalls, for the recent scene and the subsequent parting with his wife had shaken his resolution; while the young Forster advanced respectfully to the side of his lord.

"Is the Herr Count troubled?" demanded the latter, after a moment of deferential silence.

Emich dropped the cloak, and leaning a hand familiarly on the shoulder of his young servitor, he stood regarding the gorgeous riches and elaborate beauty of the high altar, all of which was rendered doubly imposing by the powerful light that now illuminated the whole interior of the edifice, which was never more beautiful than as then seen, with its strong relief and deep shadows.

"Berchthold, there is a God!" he said with emphasis.

"None but the fool doubts it, Herr Emich."

"And he hath His ministers on earth—those whom He hath commissioned to do Him pleasure, and to burn His incense."

"We have high authority for this belief, my good Lord."

"We have—the authority is high, that hath so much antiquity—which so suits our secret desires—which descends to us from our fathers."

"And which is so supported by proofs, sacred and profane."

"Thou hast been well schooled, good Berchthold," said the Count, looking earnestly at his companion.

"Heaven left me a pious and tender mother, when it took my father away."

Emich continued to lean on the shoulder of Berchthold, while his eye, in which sternness of purpose was singularly blended with the waverings of doubt, never turned from its contemplation of the altar. Above the chased and gilded cabinet which contained the host, was a small picture of the Mother of Christ, delineated in those mild and attractive colors with which the pencil is accustomed to portray the Virgin Wife of Joseph. Her eye seemed to meet the gaze of Emich in sorrow. It was easy to fancy the gentle expression was in reproach of the sacrilege.

"These Benedictines are at length unhoused"—he continued, trying fruitlessly to avert his look from that mild but expressive image; "they have too long ridden roughly on their betters."

Berchthold bowed.

"Dost thou see aught strange, youth, in that image of Maria?"

"'Tis a skilful design, Herr Count, and a fair face to regard."

"Methinks it looks upon this violence with an evil eye!"

"'Tis but the work of an ingenious man, my Lord, and cannot look other than it hath always seemed."

"Dost think thus, Berchthold? There are many who pretend that images and paintings have been known to speak, when it was Heaven's pleasure."

"They relate such legends, my good Lord, but these are events that are little wont to touch those who are not much disposed to see them."

"And yet in these facts had my fathers faith, and in this belief was I trained!"

Berchthold was mute, his own education having been more suited to the growing opinions of the times.

"That God *can* surpass the ordinary workings of nature, to effect His pleasure," continued Emich, "we may at least believe."

"It may be believed, Herr Count, but is it necessary? He who made nature may use it at his pleasure."

"Ha! thou has no faith in miracles, boy!"

"I am myself a miracle, that tells me every moment of the existence of a superior power; and in that much I bend to its control. But it hath never been my fortune to hear an image speak, or see it do aught else that belongs to the will."

"By my father's bones! but thou art fit to deal with the cunningest knave that wears a cowl! How now, brave followers!" turning toward his people; "leave no vestige of the roguery and abominations that have so long been done within these polluted walls!"

"Herr Count!" said Berchthold eagerly, presuming in his haste to touch the cloak of Emich, "here are the Benedictines!"

The word caused the bold, and at that moment the independent, Baron to turn suddenly, laying a hand on his sword, as he did so. But the hand released its grasp, and the features of Emich immediately reverted to their former expression of anxiety and doubt, at what he now beheld.

By this time all of the different edifices which composed the Abbey of Limburg were fired, the church and its immediate appendages alone excepted. The consequence was such an increase of light within the latter, as penetrated the most obscure of its Gothic recesses. The choir, above all, received the strongest illumination; and young Berchthold thought its tracery never appeared so beautiful as in that fearful moment of impending destruction. The candles and lamps of the great altar began to look dim, and all around prevailed the glorious and fiery brightness which accompanies a fierce conflagration. During the instant that Emich was turned toward his people, two monks had come from the sacristy, and placed themselves on the steps of the altar. They were the Prior and Father Johan. The former bore a small ivory crucifix, which from time to time he kissed, while the latter placed at his feet a massive and curiously carved chest, of sufficient size

and weight to have required the aid of a lay-brother to bring it from its repository.

The countenance of the Prior was mild, persuasive, and filled with holy concern. That of his companion flushed, excited, and bearing the look of feverish fire, which is the effect of an enthusiasm that springs as much from temperament as from conviction.

Emich looked at the Benedictines uneasily, and he advanced so near, always attended by the Forester, as to be within reach of his arm.

"'Fore God, but ye are tardy, Fathers," he said, determined to assume an indifference he was far from feeling; "the pious Bonifacius hath departed many minutes, and quickened, as he is, by love of his person, I make no question that his footsteps have already gone down the mountain side!"

"Thou hast at length yielded to the whispering of the devil, Count of Leiningen!" returned the Prior; "thou art resolute that this blot shall rest upon thy soul!"

"We are not at confession, holy Arnolph, but engaged in a knightly redressing of our rights; if thou hast aught here that is dear to thee, take it, of God's name, and go thy way. Thou shalt have safe conduct, were it to the gates of Rome; for, of all thy fraternity, thou art he for whom alone I feel regret or amity, in this just enterprise."

"I know not this difference in love, when it touches the existence of our shrine, or the duty that ties us to its service. This question is not between thee and me, Lord Emich, but between thee and God."

"Have it as thou wilt, Herr Prior, so thou dost but depart in peace."

"I am not weak enough to resist when resistance is vain," mildly answered the Monk; "nor am I quick to desert my post, while there is hope. Thou hast not well bethought thee of this act, Emich; thou hast not remembered thy posterity, nor thy kind interest in the noble Ermengarde!"

"Dost fancy me an uxurious citizen, reverend Arnolph, that thou wouldest fain stop a knight in his onset by speaking of the good wife and her babes?"

As he concluded, Emich laughed.

"Thou hast not well conceived me. This is not a question of death in battle, or of the grief of those who survive; for such thoughts are, unhappily, but too common.

with those who rule the earth, to raise disquiet ; but I would speak to thee of the long future and of its pains. Dost thou know, irreverend Baron, that the God of Israel—who is my God and thine—the God of Israel hath said that he will visit the sins of the parent upon the descendant, from generation to generation ? and yet, blinded by this specious success, thou seemest to court his anger.”

“ This may be so or not ; for ye of the cloisters have many subtle ways of reasoning as you wish ; but to me it seemeth better that each should suffer for his own sins ; and such, I take it, is what the community of Limburg doth now undergo.”

“ That we have done much evil, and neglected much good, is, alas, too true ! ”

“ By the kings of Koeln ! thou art getting to be of our side, holy Arnolph ! ”

“ For such is the common course,” continued the unmoved Prior,—“ but that thou art not our judge is equally certain. That each does and will suffer for his own acts is beyond denial, but the fearful consequences of crime do not stop with him who hath committed it. This much is taught us by reason, and what is still more sure, it is consecrated by words from God’s own mouth. Ponder, then, while thou may, on the load of sorrow thou art heaping on thy descendants ; remember that thou standest there, subject to goading passions, the miserable being thou art, simply that in thy person thou payest the price of a parent’s sins. What our common father did is still avenged on us his children.”

“ How now, Herr Prior, thou pushest my pedigree much beyond its pretensions. Noble and princely, if thou wilt, but I pass not the dark ages in any of my claims. Let them that have greater ambition pay for the purchase in the way thou namest ; I am content with more modern honors.”

Emich spoke jeeringly, but the attentive Monk saw that he was troubled.

“ If thou hast no thought for posterity—none for thyself—none for thy God, Emich,” the latter resumed, “ bethink thee of those who have gone before. Hast already forgotten thy visit to the tombs of thy family ? ”

“ Thou hast me there, Arnolph !—those sacred vaults have been thy convent’s shield these many months ! ”

“ And thou art now disposed to forget them ? ”

"If thou wilt ask yon honest men, they will tell thee, Prior, they have no order to spare the meanest of thy marble cherubs, even though it hover over a grave of mine own house."

"Then do I indeed despair of touching thy heart!" answered Father Arnolph, sorrowing as much for the crime as for its consequences. "Then indeed art thou madly and ruthlessly bent, not only on our destruction, but on thine own; for pity for the child, and love of the parent, are equally despised. Emich of Leiningen, I curse thee not—this is a weapon too fearful for human hands lightly to wield. I bless thee not; duty to God forbids the holy office."

"Hold! reverend Arnolph, let us not part in anger—I would, in sooth, crave from thy worthy hands some touch of consolation—if—aye—if there be chapel in this church, for which thou hast more than usual reverence, let it be named, and I swear, by knight's faith, unless the work be already done, it shall stand unscathed amid the ruins, in testimony of my love for thee—or if thou hast aught here of price, whether of monkish or worldly value, point it out, that it may be held safe for thy better leisure. In return, I ask but the parting words of peace."

"'Tis forbidden to those who war against God," returned the grieved Prior, releasing his robe from the eager grasp of the Baron.—"I can and will pray for thee, Emich; but to bless thee were treachery to Heaven!"

So saying, the pious Arnolph buried his face in his dress, to shut out the view of the profanation that was working around him, and withdrew slowly from the choir.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Avaunt!

Incarnate Lucifer! 'tis holy ground:

A martyr's ashes now lie there, which make it

A shrine."—BYRON.

DURING the foregoing scene, the Benedictine, already known to the reader as Father Johan, had awaited its issue with a species of lofty patience on the steps of the altar. But in a character so exaggerated, there remained little

that was purely natural ; even the forbearance of the Monk partook of the forced and fervid qualities of his mind. Conventual discipline, deep and involuntary respect for the Prior, and that very disdain which he felt for all gentle means of recalling a sinner to the fold, kept him tolerably tranquil, while Emich and his spiritual superior held their parley ; but there was a gleam of wild delight in his eye, when he found, of all that powerful and boasted fraternity, that he alone remained to defend the altars. The feeling of the moment in such a breast, notwithstanding the scene of tumult that rather increased than diminished in the church, was that of triumph. He exulted in his own constancy, and he anticipated the effects which were to follow from his firmness, with the self-complacency of a prurient confidence, and with the settled conviction of an enthusiast.

Emich took little heed of his presence, during the first moments that succeeded the departure of the Prior. There is a majesty and a quiet energy in truth and sound principles, that happily form their constant buttresses. Without this wise provision of Providence, the world would be hopelessly abandoned to the machinations of those who consider all means lawful, provided the ends tend to their own success. All near the Abbey of Limburg had felt the influence of these high qualities in Father Arnolph, and it is more than probable that, as in the case of the city of Canaan, had the community contained four of his spiritual peers, the Abbey would not have fallen.

The Count, in particular, who, like all that first break from mental servitude, was so often troubled with strong doubts, had long entertained a deep respect for this monk ; and it is not improbable, that had the pious Arnolph fully understood his own power, by an early and more vigilant use of his means, he might have found a way to avert the blow that had now alighted on Limburg. But the meekness and modesty of the Prior were qualities as strongly marked as his more active virtues, and the policy of Limburg was not of a character to rely on either for its security.

“There is good in that brother,” said Emich to Berchtold, when his thoughtful eye again rose to the face of the young Forester.—“Had he been mitred, instead of Bonifacius, our rights might have still suffered.”

“Few are more beloved than Father Arnolph, Herr Count, and none so deserve to be.”

"Thou art of this mind! How now, Master Heinrich! art in monkish meditation in thy stall, or dost dispose of the lesson of the virtuous Ulrike, more at thy ease, in a seat where so much substantial carnal aliment hath been digested by godly Benedictines! Come to the front, like a stout soldier, and give us the savor of thy good wisdom in this strait."

"Methinks, our work is well-nigh done, Lord Emich," answered Heinrich, complying with the request; "my faithful townsmen are not idle in the chapels and among the tombs, and the sledge of yon smith dealeth with an angel an' it were a bar of molten iron. Each stroke leaves a mark that no chisel will repair!"

"Let the knaves amuse themselves; every blow is quickened by the recollection of some hard penance. Thou seest that they place the confessionals in a pile ready for the torch! This is attacking the enemy in his citadel. But Heinrich, is the excellent Ulrike wont to come forth with thee in thy frays against the Church? God's judgments! Were Ermengarde of this humor, we should have no hope of salvation in our castle!"

"You do my wife injustice, Herr Count; Ulrike was here to pray, and not to encourage."

"Thou mightest have spared the explanation, for truly such encouragement never did soldier need! Wert privy to the visit,—ha!—wert privy, worthy Burgomaster?"

"To speak you honestly, Herr Emich, I thought the woman otherwise bestowed."

"By the Magi!—in her bed?"

"Nay, at her prayers, but in a different place. But we do her too much honor, noble Emich, to let the movements of a mere housewife occupy our high thoughts in this busy moment."

"Nothing that touches thee is of light concern with thy friends, good Burgomaster," answered the Baron, who pondered with instinctive uneasiness, even in that moment of tumult, on this visit of Ulrike to the Benedictines, at an hour so unusual.

"Thou art well wived, Herr Heinrich, and all that know thy consort do her honor!"

The Burgomaster was a man by far too well satisfied with his own superior merits to harbor jealousy. Self-complacency might have been at the bottom of his security, though it were scarce possible for one even much more ad-

dicted by nature to that tormenting passion, to have lived so long in perfect familiarity with the pure mind of Ulrike, without feeling reverence for its principles and virtue. The sentiments of the Baron were very different ; for though in his heart equally convinced of the character of her to whom he alluded, he could not altogether exclude the suspicions of a man of loose habits, nor the uneasiness of one who had himself been discarded. The answer of the husband, however, served to turn the discourse, by giving the Burgomaster an opportunity of placing himself in the most prominent relief.

"A thousand thanks, illustrious Herr," he said, raising his cap ; "the woman is not amiss, though much troubled with infirmity on the score of altars and penances. When we shall have fairly disposed of Limburg, another reign will commence among our wives and daughters, and we can hope for more quiet Sabbaths. As to this grace of your present speech, Lord Count, I take it, as was no doubt meant, to be another pledge of our lasty amity and close alliance."

"Thou talkest well," quickly answered Emich, losing the passing feeling of distrust in the recollection of his present purpose ; "no words of friendship are lost, on a true and sworn supporter. Well, Heinrich, is our affair finally achieved ?"

"Sapperment ! Herr Count, if not finished, it is in a fair way to be so quickly."

"Here remaineth a Benedictine !" said Berchthold, drawing their attention to the Monk, who still maintained his post on the steps of the altar.

"The bees do not relish quitting their hive, while any of the hard earnings are left," said the Count, laughing ; "what wouldst thou, Father Johan ?—if thy careful mind hath had thought of the precious vessels, make thy choice and depart."

The Benedictine returned the laugh of the noble, with a smile of deep but quiet exultation.

"Assemble thy followers, rude Baron," he said ; "call all within thy control to this sanctified spot, for there yet remaineth a power to be overcome of which thou hast not taken heed ; at the moment when thou fanciest thyself most secure, art thou nearest to disgrace and to destruction."

As the excited Monk suited his words by a correspond-

ing energy of emphasis and tone, Emich recoiled a step, like one who distrusted a secret mine. The desperate character of Father Johan's enthusiasm was well-known and neither of the three listeners was without apprehension that the fraternity, aware of the invasion, had plotted some deep design of vengeance, which this exaggerated brother had been deputed to execute.

"Ho! without there!" cried the Count—"Let a party descend quickly to the crypt, and look to the villanies of these pretended saints; cousin of Viederbach," revealing in the eagerness of the moment the presence of this sworn soldier of the Cross, "see thou to our safety, for the Rhodian warfare hath made thee familiar with these treacheries."

The call of the Count, which was uttered like a battle cry, stayed the hands of the destroyers. Some rushed to obey the order, while most of the others gathered hastily into the choir. It is certain that the presence of fellow-sufferers diminishes the force of fear, even though it may in truth increase the danger; for such is the constitution of our minds, that they willingly admit the influence of sympathy whether it be in pain or pleasure. When Emich found himself backed by so many of his band, he thought less of the apprehended mine, and he turned to question the Monk, with more of the calmness that became his condition.

"Thou wouldst have the followers of Hartenburg, Father," he said, ironically, "and thou seest how readily they come!"

"I would that all who have listened to schismatics—all who refuse honor to the holy Church—all who deny Rome—and all that believe themselves on earth freed from the agency of Heaven, now stood before me!" answered the Benedictine, examining the group of heads that clustered among the stalls, with the bright but steady eye of one engrossed with the consciousness of his force. "Thou art in hundreds, Count Leiningen—would it were God's pleasure that it had been in millions!"

"We are of sufficient strength for our object, Monk."

"That remaineth to be seen. Now, listen to a voice from above!—I speak to you, unhallowed ministers of the will of this ambitious Baron—to you, misguided and ignorant tools of a scheme that hath been plotted of evil, and hath been brought forth from the prolific brain of the restless Father of Sin. Ye have come at the heels of your

lord, vainly rejoicing in a visible but impotent power—impiously craving the profits of your unholy enterprise, and forgetting God! —”

“By the mass, priest!” interrupted Emich; “thou hast once already given us a sermon to-day, and time presseth. If thou hast an enemy to present, bring him forth; but we tire of these churchly offices.”

“Thou hast had thy moment of wanton will, abandoned Emich, and now cometh the judgment—seest thou this box of precious relics!—dost thou forget that Limburg is rich in these holy remains, and that their virtues are yet untried?—Woe to him who scoffeth at their character, and despiseth their power!”

“Stay thy hand, Johan!” cried the Count hastily, when he saw that the Monk was about to expose some of those well-known vestiges of mortality to which the Church of Rome then, as now, attributed miraculous interventions; “this is no moment for fooleries!”

“Callest thou this sacred office by so profane a name!—abide the issue, foul-mouthed asperser of our holy authority, and triumph if thou canst!”

The Count was much disturbed, for his reason had far less influence now in supporting him than his ambition. The party in the rear, too, began to waver, for opinion was not then sufficiently confirmed to render the mass indifferent to such an exposure of clerical power. Whatever may be the difference that exists between Christian sects concerning the validity of modern miracles, all will allow, that, when trained in the belief of their reality, the mind is less prepared to resist their influence than that of any other engine by which it can be assailed, since it is placing the impotency of man in direct and obvious collision with the power of the Deity. Before such an exhibition of force, nature offers no means of resistance; and the mysterious and unseen agency by which the wonder is produced, enlists in its interest both the imagination and that innate dread of omnipotence which all possess.

“’Twere well this matter went no farther!” said Emich, uneasily whispering his principal agents.

“Nay, my Lord Count,” answered Berchthold, calmly, “it may be good to know the right of the matter. If we are not of Heaven’s side in this affair, let it be shown in our own behalf; and if the Benedictines are no better than pretenders, our consciences will be all the easier.”

"Thou art presuming, boy—none know the end of this!—Herr Heinrich, thou art silent?"

"What would you have, noble Emich, of a poor Burgo-master? I will own, I think it were more for the advantage of Duerckheim that the matter went no farther."

"Thou hearest, Benedictine!" said the Count, laying the point of his sheathed sword on the richly chased and much revered box that the Monk had already unlocked,—"this must stop here!"

"Take away the weapon, Emich of Leiningen," said Father Johan, with dignity.

The Count obeyed, though he scarce knew why.

"This is a fearful instant for the unbeliever," continued the Monk; "the moment is near when our altars shall be avenged—nay, recoil not, bold Baron—remain to the end, ye dissolute and forsaken followers of the wicked, for in vain ye hope to flee the judgment."

There was so much of tranquil enthusiasm in the air and faith of Father Johan, that, spite of a general wish to be at a distance from the relics, curiosity, and the inherent principle of religious awe, held each man spell-bound; though every heart beat quicker as the Monk proceeded, calmly, and with a reverential mien, to expose the bones of saints, the remnants of mantles, the reputed nails of the true cross, and morsels of its wood, with divers other similar memorials of holy events, and of sainted martyrs. Not a foot had power to retire. When all were laid, in solemn silence, on the bright and glowing shrine, Father Johan, crossing himself, again turned to the crowd.

"What may be Heaven's purpose in this strait, I know not," he said; "but withered be the hand, and for ever accursed the soul, of him who dareth violence to these holy vestiges of Christian faith!"

Uttering these ominous words, the Benedictine faced the crucifix, and kneeled in silent prayer. The minute that followed was one of fearful portent to the cause of the invaders. Eye sought eye in doubt, and one regarded the fretted vault, another gazed intently at the speaking image of Maria, as if each expected some miraculous manifestation of divine displeasure. The issue would have been doubtful, had not the cherry-wood trumpet of the cow-herd again sounded most opportunely in his master's behalf. The wily knave blew a well-known and popular imitation of the beasts of his herd, among the arches of

the chapel, striking at the effect of what had just passed by the interposition of a familiar and vulgar idea. The influence of the ludicrous, at moments when the passions vacillate, or the reason totters, is too well known to need elucidation. It is another of those caprices of humanity that baffle theories, proving how very far we are removed from being the exclusively reasoning animal we are fond of thinking the species.

The expedient of the ready-witted Gottlob produced its full effect. The most ignorant of the castle followers, those even whose dull minds had been on the verge of an abject deference to superstition, took courage at the daring of the cow-herd; and, as the least founded in any belief are commonly the most vociferous in its support, this portion of the band echoed the interruption from fifty hoarse throats. Emich felt like a man reprieved; for under the double influence of his own distrust, and the wavering of his followers, the Count for a moment had fancied his long-meditated destruction of the community of Limburg in great danger of being frustrated.

Encouraged by each other's cries, the invaders returned to their work laughing at their own alarm. The chairs and confessionals had been already heaped in the great aisle, and a brand was thrown into the pile. Fire was applied to the church wherever there was food for the element, and some of the artisans of Duerckheim, better instructed than their looser associates, found the means to light the conflagration in such parts of the roofs and the other superior stories, as would insure the destruction of the pile. In the meantime, all the exterior edifices had been burning, and the whole hill, to the eye of him who dwelt in the valley beneath, presented volumes of red flame, or of lurid smoke.

During the progress of this scene, Emich paced the choir, partly exulting in his success, and partly doubting of its personal fruits. Over the temporal consequences he had well pondered; but the motionless attitude of Father Johan, the presence of the long-reverenced relics, and the denunciations of the Church, still had their terrors for one whose mind had few well-grounded resources to sustain it. From this state of uneasiness he was aroused by the noise of the sledge, at work in the crypt. Followed by Heinrich and Berchthold, the Count hastened to descend to this place, which it will be remembered contained

the tombs and the chapel of his race. Here, as above, all was in bright light, and all was in confusion. Most of the princely and noble tombs had already undergone mutilation, and no chapel had been respected. Before that of Hartenburg, however, Albrecht of Viederbach stood, with folded arms and a thoughtful eye. The cloak which, during the commencement of the attack, had served to conceal his person, was now neglected, and he seemed to forget the prudence of disguise, in deep contemplation.

"We have at length got to the monuments of our fathers, cousin ;" said the Count, joining him.

"To their very bones, noble Emich !"

"The worthy knights have long slept in evil company ; there shall be further rest for them in the chapel of Hartenburg."

"I hope it may be found, Herr Graf, that this adventure is lawful !"

"How !—dost thou doubt, with the work so near accomplished ?"

"By the mass ! a soldier of Rhodes might better be fighting your turbaned infidel, than awakening the nobles of his own house from so long a sleep, at so short a summons !"

"Thou canst retire into my hold, Herr Albrecht, if thy arm is wearied," said Emich, coldly ; "not a malediction can reach thee there."

"That would be poor requital for a free hospitality, cousin ; the travelling knight is the ally of the last friend, even though there be some wrong to general duties. But we cavaliers of the island well know, that a retreat, to be honorable, must be orderly, and not out of season. I am with thee, Emich, for the hour, and so no more parley. This was the image of the good Bishop of our line ?"

"He had some such reverend office, I do believe ; but speak of him as thou wilt, none can say he was a Benedictine."

"It had been better, cousin, since this church is to be sacked, that our predecessors had found other consecrated ground for their dust. Well, we sworn soldiers pass uneven lives ! It is now some twelve months or so, that like a loyal and professed Rhodian, I stood to my knees in water, making good a trench against your believer in Houris and your unbeliever in Christ ; and now, forsooth, I am here as a spectator (none call me more with honesty),

while a Christian altar is overturned, and a brotherhood of shaven monks are sent adrift upon earth, like so many disbanded mercenaries !”

“By the Three Kings! my cousin, thou makest a fit comparison; for like disbanded mercenaries have they gone forth to prey upon society in a new shape.—Spare the angel of my grandfather, good smith,” cried Emich, interrupting himself; “if there be any virtue in the image, ’tis for the benefit of our house !”

Dietrich stayed his uplifted arm, and directed the intended blow at another object. The marble flew in vast fragments at each collision with his sledge, and the leaders of the party soon found it necessary to retire, to avoid the random efforts of the heated crowd.

There no longer remained a doubt of the fate of these long known and much celebrated conventual buildings. Tomb fell after tomb, monuments were defaced, altars were overturned, chapels sacked, and every object that was in the least likely to resist the action of fire received such indelible injuries as rendered its restoration difficult or impossible.

During the continuance of their efforts, the conflagration had advanced, as the fierce element that had been called in to assist the destroyers is known to do its work. Most of the dormitories, kitchens, and outer buildings were consumed, so far as the materials allowed, beyond redress; and it became apparent that the great church and its dependencies would soon be untenable.

Emich and his companions were still in the crypt, when a cry reached them, admonishing all within hearing to retreat, lest they become victims to the flames. Berchthold and the smith drove before them the crowd from the crypt, and there was a general rush to gain the outer door.

When the interior of the church was clear, the Count and his followers paused in the court, contemplating the scene, with curious eyes, like men satisfied with their work. No sooner was the common attention directed back towards the spot from whence they had just escaped, than a general cry, that partook equally of wonder and horror, broke from the crowd. As the doors were all thrown wide, and every cranny of the building was illuminated by the fierce light of the flames that were raging in the roofs, the choir was nearly as visible to those with-

out as if it stood exposed to the rays of a noon-day sun. Father Johan was still kneeling before the altar.

In obedience to the commands of Emich, the sacred shrine had been stript of its precious vessels, but none had presumed to touch a relic. On these long venerated memorials, the Benedictine kept his eyes riveted, in the firm conviction that, sooner or later, the power of God would be made manifest in defence of his violated temple.

"The monk! the monk!" exclaimed fifty eager voices.

"I would fain save the fanatic!" said Emich, with great and generous concern.

"He may listen to one who beareth this holy emblem," cried the Knight of Rhodes, releasing his cross from the doublet in which it had been concealed. "Will any come with me to the rescue of this mad Benedictine?"

There was as much of repentant atonement in the offer of Albrecht of Viederbach, as there was of humanity. But the impulse which led young Berchthold forward, was purely generous. Notwithstanding the imminent peril of the attempt, they darted together into the building, and passed swiftly up the choir. The heat was getting to be oppressive, though the great height of the ceilings still rendered it tolerable. They approached the altar, advising the monk of his danger by their cries.

"Do ye come to be witnesses of Heaven's power?" demanded Father Johan, smiling with the calm of an inveterate enthusiast; "or do ye come, sore-stricken penitents that ye have done this deed?"

"Away, good father!" hurriedly answered Berchthold; "Heaven is against the community to-night; in another minute, yon fiery roof will fall."

"Hearest thou the blasphemer, Lord? Is it thy holy will, that——"

"Listen to a sworn soldier of the cross," interrupted Albrecht, showing his Rhodian emblem—"we are of one faith, and we will now depart together for another trial."

"Away! false servant! and thou, abandoned boy!—See ye these sainted relics!——"

At a signal from the knight, Berchthold seized the monk by one side, while Albrecht did the same thing on the other, and he was yet speaking as they bore him down the choir. But they struggled with one that a long encouraged and morbid view of life had rendered mad. Before they reached the great aisle, the fanatic had liberated

himself, and, while his captors were recovering breath, he was again at the foot of the altar. Instead of kneeling, however, Father Johan now seized the most venerated of the relics, which he held on high, audibly imploring Heaven to hasten the manifestation of its majesty.

"He is doomed!" said Albrecht of Viederbach, retiring from the church.

As the Knight of Rhodes rushed through the great door, a massive brand fell from the ceiling upon the pavement, scattering its coals like so many twinkling stars.

"Berchthold! Berchthold!" was shouted from a hundred throats.

"Come forth, rash boy!" cried Emich, with a voice in which agony was blended with the roar of the conflagration.

Berchthold seemed spell-bound. He gazed wistfully at the monk, and darted back again towards the altar. An awful crashing above, which resembled the settling of a mountain of snow about to descend in an avalanche, grated on the ear. The very men who, so short a time before, had come upon the hill ready and prepared to slay, now uttered groans of horror at witnessing the jeopardy of their fellow-creatures; for, whatever we may be in moments of excitement, there are latent sympathies in human nature, which too much use may deaden, but which nothing but death can finally extinguish.

"Come forth, young Berchthold! come forth, my gallant forester!" shouted the voice of the Count above the clamor of the crowd, as if rallying his followers with a battle-cry. "He will die with the wretched monk!—The youth is mad!"

Berchthold was struggling with the Benedictine, though none knew what passed between them. There was another crash, and the whole pavement began to glow with fallen brands. Then came a breaking of rafters, and a scattering of fire that denoted the end. The interior of the chapel resembled the burning shower which usually closes a Roman girandola, and the earth shook with the fall of the massive structure. There are horrors on which few human eyes can bear to dwell. At this moment nearly every hand veiled a face, and every head was averted. But the movement lasted only an instant. When the interior was again seen, it appeared a fiery furnace. The altar still stood, however, and Johan miraculously kept his

post on its steps. Berchthold had disappeared. The gesticulations of the Benedictine were wilder than ever, and his countenance was that of a man whose reason had hopelessly departed. He kept his feet only for a moment, but withering fell. After which his body was seen to curl like a green twig that is seared by the flames.

CHAPTER XXII.

“Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves.”

—*Midsummer Night's Dream.*

THE constant moral sentinel that God hath set on watch in every man's breast, but which acts so differently in different circumstances, though, perhaps, in no condition of humiliation and ignorance does it ever entirely desert its trust, is sure to bring repentance with the sense of error. It is vain to say that this innate sentiment of truth, which we call conscience, is the mere result of opinion and habit, since it is even more apparent in the guileless and untrained child than in the most practised man, and nature has so plainly set her mark upon all its workings as to prove its identity with the fearful being that forms the incorporeal part of our existence. Like all else that is good, it may be weakened and perverted, or be otherwise abused; but, like everything that comes from the same high source, even amid these vicious changes, it will retain traces of its divine author. We look upon this unwearied monitor as a vestige of that high condition from which the race fell: and we hold it to be beyond dispute, that precisely as men feel and admit its influence, do they approach, or recede from, their original condition of innocence.

The destruction of the Abbey was succeeded by most of those signs which attend all acts of violence, in degrees that are proportioned to previous habits. Even they who had been most active in accomplishing this long-meditated blow began to tremble for its consequences; and few in the Palatinate heard of the deed, without holding their breaths like men who expected Heaven would summarily avenge the sacrilege. But in order that the thread of the narrative should not be broken, we will return to our in-

cidents in their proper order, advancing the time but a few days after the night of the conflagration.

The reader will have to imagine another view of the Jägerthal. There was the same smiling sun, and the same beneficent season ; the forest was as green and waving, the meadows were as smooth and dark, the hill-sides as bright beneath the play of light and shade, while the murmuring brook was as limpid and swift, as when first presented to his eye in these pages. Not a hut or cottage was disturbed, either in the hamlets or along the travelled paths, and the Hold of Hartenburg still frowned in feudal power and baronial state, on the well-known pass of the mountains, gloomy, massive, and dark. But the hill of Limburg presented one of those sad and melancholy proofs of the effects of violence which are still scattered over the face of the old world, like so many admonitory beacons of the scenes through which its people have reached their present state of comparative security :—beacons that should be as useful in communicating lessons for the future, as they are pregnant with pictures of the past.

The outer wall remained unharmed, with the single exception of the principal gate, which bore the indelible marks of the smith's sledges ; but above this barrier the work of devastation appeared in characters not to be mistaken. Every roof, and there had been fifty, was fallen ; every wall, some of which were already tottering, was blackened ; and not a tower pointed towards the sky that did not show marks of the manner in which the flames had wreathed around its slender shaft. Here and there a small thread of white smoke curled upwards, losing itself in the currents of the air, resembling so many of the lessening symptoms of a volcano after an explosion. A small crucifix, which popular rumor said was wood, but which, in fact, was of painted stone, still kept its place on a gable of the ruined church ; and many a peasant addressed to it his silent prayers, firm in the belief that God had protected this image of His sacrifice, throughout the terrors of the memorable night.

In and about the castle, there appeared the usual evidences of a distrustful watch ;—such ward as is kept by him who feels that he has justly become obnoxious to the hand of the constituted powers. The gates were closed ; the sentinels on the walls and bastions were doubled ; and, from time to time, signals were made that communicated

with lookouts, so stationed on the hills that they could command views of the roads which led toward the Rhine, beyond the gorge of the valley.

The scene in Duerckheim was different, though it also had some points of resemblance with that in the hold. There was the same apprehension of danger from without, the same watchfulness on the walls and in the towers, and the same unusual display of an armed force. But in a town of this description, it was not easy to imitate the gloomy reserve of baronial state. The citizens grouped together in the streets, the women gossiped as in all sudden and strong cases of excitement, and even the children appeared to reflect the uneasiness and indecision of their parents; for as the hand of authority relaxed in their seniors, most wandered idly and vaguely among the men, listening to catch such loose expressions as might enlighten their growing understandings. The shops were opened, as usual, but many stopped to discourse at the doors, while few entered; and most of the artisans wasted their time in speculations on the consequence of the hardy step of their superiors.

In the meantime there was a council held in the town-hall. Here were assembled all who laid claim to civic authority in Duerckheim, with some who appeared under the claim of their services in the late assault upon the monks. A few of the anxious wives of the burghers, also, were seen collected in the more public rooms of the building; for domestic influence was neither covert nor trifling in that uxorious and simple community. We shall resume the narrative within the walls of this municipal edifice.

The Burgomaster and other chief men were much moved by the vague apprehension which was the consequence of their hazardous experiment. Some were bold in the audacity of success; some doubted merely because the destruction of the brotherhood seemed too great a good to come unmixed with evil; some held their opinions in suspense, waiting for events to give a value to their predictions, and others shook their heads in a manner that would appear to imply a secret knowledge of consequences that were not apparent to vulgar faculties. The latter class was more remarkable for its pretension to exclusive merit than for numbers, and would have been equally prompt to exaggerate the advantages of the recent measure had the public pulse just then been beating on the access. But

the public pulse was on the decline, and, as we have said, seeing and understanding all the advantages that were to be hoped from the defeat of Bonifacius, uncertainty quickened most imaginations in a manner to conjure disagreeable pictures of the future. Even Heinrich, who wanted for neither moral nor physical resolution, was disturbed at his own victory, though if questioned he could scarcely have told the reason why. This uneasiness was heightened by the fact that most of his compeers regarded him as the man on whom the weight of the Church's and of the Elector's displeasure was most likely to fall, though it is more than probable that his situation would have been far less prominent had there been no question of any results but such as were agreeable.

This sort of distinction, so isolated in defeat, and so social in prosperity, is a species of revenge that society is very apt to take of all who pretend to be wiser or better than itself by presuming to point the way in cases of doubtful expediency, or in presuming to lead the way in those that require decision and nerve. He alone is certain of an unenvied reputation who, in preceding the main body in the great march of events, leaves no very sensible space between him and his fellows; while he alone can hope for impunity who keeps so near his backers as to be able to confound himself in the general mass when singularity brings comment and censure.

Heinrich fully felt the awkwardness of his position, and, just then, he would gladly have compounded for less of the fame acquired by the bold manner in which he had led the attack, in order to be rid of some of his anxiety. Still a species of warlike instinct led him to put the best face on the affair, and when he addressed his colleagues, it was with cheerfulness in his tones, however little there might have been of that desirable feeling in his heart.

"Well, brethren," he said, looking around at the knot of well-known faces which surrounded him in the gravity of civic authority, "this weighty matter is, at length, happily, and, as it has been effected without bloodshed, I may say, peaceably over! The Benedictines are departed, and though the excellent Abbot hath taken post in a neighboring Abbey, whence he sends forth brave words to frighten those who are unused to more dangerous missiles, it will be long before we shall again hear Limburg bell tolling in the Jaegerthal."

"For that I can swear," said the smith, who was among the inferiors that crowded a corner of the hall, occupying as little space as possible in deference to their head-men;—"my own sledge hath helped to put the fine-tuned instrument out of tune!"

"We are now met to hear further propositions from the monks; but as the hour set for the arrival of their agent is not yet come, we can lighten the moments by such discourse as the circumstances may seem to require. Hast anything to urge that will ease the minds of the timid, brother Wolfgang?—if so, of God's name, give it utterance, that we may know the worst at once."

The affinity between Wolfgang and Heinrich existed altogether in their civic relations. The former, although he coveted the anticipated advantages that were to result from the downfall of Limburg, had a constitutional deference for all superior power, and was unable to enjoy the triumph without the bitterest misgivings concerning the displeasure of the Elector and Rome. He was aged, too—a fact that served to heighten the tremor of tones, that, by a very general convention, are termed raven.

"It is wise to call upon the experienced and wise, for counsel, in pressing straits," returned the old burgher, "for years teach the folly of everything human, inclining us to look at the world with moderation, and with less love for ourselves and our interests——"

"Brother Wolfgang, thou art not yet yielding so fast as thou wouldest have us believe," interrupted Heinrich, who particularly disliked any discouraging views of the future. "Thou art but a boy—the difference between us cannot be greater than some five-and-twenty years."

"Not that, not that;—I count but three-and-seventy, and thou mayest fairly number fifty-and-five."

"Thou heapest honors on me I little deserve, friend Wolfgang. I shall not number the days thou namest these many months, and time marches fast enough without any fillips from us to help him. If I have yet seen more than fifty-four, may my fathers arise from their graves to claim the little they left behind, when they took leave of earth!"

"Words will make neither young, but I could wish we had found means to lay this unquiet spirit of Limburg, without so much violence and danger to ourselves. I am old, and have little interest in life, except to see those who

will come after me happy and peaceful. Thou knowest that I have neither chick nor child, neighbor Heinrich, and the heart of such a man can only beat for all. 'Twere, indeed, folly in me to think of much else than of that great future which lies before us."

"Sapperment!" exclaimed the smith, who was disposed to presume a little on the spirit he had shown in the late attack.—"Worshipful Burgomaster, were Master Wolfgang to deal out some of his stores a little freely to the Benedictines, the whole affair might be quietly settled, and Duerckheim would be a great gainer. I warrant you now, that Bonifacius would be glad to receive a well-told sum in gold, without question or farther account, in lieu of his lodgings and fare in Limburg, of which he was only a lieutenant at best. At least such had been my humor, an' it had pleased Heaven to have made me a Benedictine, and Bonifacius a smith."

"And where is this gold to be had, bold-speaking artisan?" demanded the aged burgher, severely.

"Where but from your untouched stores, venerable Wolfgang," answered the single-minded smith; "thou art old, father, and, as thou truly sayest, without offspring; the hold of life is getting loose, and to deal with thee in frankness, I see no manner in which the evil may be so readily turned from our town."

"Peace, senseless talker! dost think thy betters have no other employment for their goods than to cast them to the winds, as thy sparks scatter at the stroke of the sledge? The little I have hath been gained with sore toil and much saving, and it may yet be needed to keep want and beggary from my door. Nay, nay, when we are young we think the dirt may be turned to gold; hot blood and lusty limbs cause us to believe man equal to any labor, aye, even to living without food; but when experience and tribulation have taught us truth, we come to know, neighbors, the value of pence. I am of a long-living stock, Heaven help us! and there is greater likelihood of my yet becoming a charge to the town than of my ever doing a tithe of that this heedless smith hath hinted."

"By St. Benedict, master! I hinted naught; what I said was in plain words, and it is this, that one so venerable for his years, and so respected for his means, might do great good in this strait! Such an act would sweeten the few days thou yet hast."

"Get thee away, fellow; thou talkest of death an' it were a joke. Do not the young go to their graves as well as the old, and are there not instances of thousands that have outlived their means? No, I much fear that this matter will not be appeased without mulcting the artisans in heavy sums;—but happily, most that belong to the crafts are young and able to pay!"

The reply of the smith, who was getting warm in a dispute in which he believed all the merit was on his own side, was cut short by a movement among the populace, who crowded the outer door of the town-house; the burghers seemed uneasy, as if they saw a crisis was near, and then a beadle announced the arrival of a messenger from the routed community of Limburg. The civic authorities of Duerckheim, although assembled expressly with the expectation of such a visit, were, like all men of but indifferently regulated minds, taken by surprise at the moment. Nothing was digested, no plan of operations had been proposed, and, although all had dreamed for several nights of the very subject before them, not one of them all had thought upon it. Still it was now necessary to act, and after a little bustle, which had no other object than an idle attempt to impose upon the senses of the messenger by a senseless parade, orders were given that the latter should be admitted.

The agent of the monks was himself a Benedictine. He entered the hall, attended only by the city-guard who had received him at the gate, with his cowl so far drawn upon his head as to conceal the features. There was a moment of curiosity, and the name of "Father Siegfried" was whispered from one to another, as each judged of the man by the exterior.

"Uncover, of Heaven's mercy! Father," said Heinrich, "and seat thyself as freely in the town-hall of Duerckheim as if thou wert at thy ease in the ancient cloisters of Limburg. We are lions in the attack, but harmless as thy marble cherubs when there is not occasion for your true manly qualities; so take thy seat, of God's name! and be of good cheer;—none will harm thee."

The voice of the Burgomaster lost its confidence as he concluded. The Benedictine was calmly removing the cowl; and when the cloth fell, it exposed the respected features of Father Arnolph.

"He that comes in the service of Him I call master,

needeth not this assurance," answered the monk ; " still I rejoyce to find ye in this mood, and not bent on maintaining an original error, by further outrages. It is never too late to see our faults, nor yet to repair them."

" I cry thy mercy, Holy Prior ! we had taken thee for a very different member of the fraternity, and thou art not the less welcome for being him thou art."

Heinrich arose respectfully, and his example was followed by all present. The Prior seemed pleased, and a glow, like that which a benevolent hope creates, passed athwart his countenance. With perfect simplicity he took the offered stool, as the least obtrusive manner of inducing the burghers to resume their seats. The experiment produced the effect he intended.

" I should pretend to an indifference I do not feel, were I to say, Heinrich Frey, that I come among you, men to whom I have often administered the rites of the Church during long and watchful years, without the wish to find that my ministrations are remembered."

" If there dwelleth knave in Duerckheim whose heart hath not been touched by thy good works, Father, the hound is without bowels, and unfit to live among honest people."

" Most true !" exclaimed the smith, in his audible by-play. " The Burgomaster doth us all justice ! I never struck spark from iron more freely than I will render respect to the most reverend Prior. His prayers are like tried steel, and next to those of him of the hermitage are in most esteem among us. Fill me an abbey with such men, and for one I shall be ready to trust all our salvation to their godliness, without thought or concern for ourselves. Sapperment ! could such a community be found, it would be a great relief to the laymen, and more particularly to your artisan, who might turn all his thoughts to his craft, with the certainty of being watched by men capable of setting the quickest-witted devil at defiance !"

Arnolph listened to this digression with patience, and he acknowledged the courtesy and friendliness of his reception by a slow inclination of the head. He was too much accustomed to hear these temporal applications of the spiritual interests of which he was a minister, to be surprised at anything ; and he was too meek on the subject of his own deserving, to despise any because they were weaker than himself. The Christian religion seems to be

divided into two great classes of worshippers ; those who think its consolations are most palpable in their direct and worldly form, and those whose aspirations are so spiritualized, and whose thoughts are so sublimated as to consider it a metaphysical theory, in which the principal object is to preserve the logical harmony. For ourselves, we believe it to be a dispensation from God to those of his creatures who are fearfully composed of the material and immaterial, and that so far as it is connected with our probation here, it is never to be considered as entirely distinct from one or the other of the great attributes of our nature. It is evident that such were not the views of the honest smith ; and it is probable had the matter been thoroughly sifted, it would have been found that, as respects Duerckheim, he was altogether of the popular party.

“Thou comest, Father, like the dove to the ark, the bearer of the olive branch,” resumed Heinrich ; “though for our northern regions a leaf of the oak would more likely have been the emblem, had Ararat been one of these well-wooded hills of ours.”

“I come to offer the conditions of our brotherhood, and to endeavor to persuade the misguided in Duerckheim to accept them. The holy abbots, with the right reverend fathers in God, the Bishops of Spire and Worms, now assembled in the latter city, have permitted me to be the bearer of their terms, an office I have sought, lest another should forget to entreat and influence in the desire to menace.”

“Gott bewahre ! thou hast done well, as is thy wont, excellent Arnolph ! Threats are about as useful with Duerckheim as the holy water is in our rhenish, both being well enough in their places ; but he that cannot be driven must be led, and liquor that is right good in itself needeth no flavor from the Church. As for this old misunderstanding between Limburg of the one side, and the noble Count of Hartenburg with our unworthy town of the other, the matter may be said to be now of easy adjustment, since the late events have cleared it of its greatest difficulty ; and so, from my heart, I wish thee joy of thy mission, and felicitate the town that it hath to treat with one so skilful and so reasonable. Thou wilt find us in a friendly humor, and ready to meet thee half-way ; for I know not the man in Duerckheim that desireth to push the controversy a foot further, or who is not at heart content.”

"No, that would be out of reason and charity," said the smith, speaking again among the auditors. "We ought to show those Benedictines an example of moderation, neighbors; and therefore for one, though no better than a poor artisan that gaineth his bread by blows on the anvil, do I agree with the worshipful Heinrich, and say, of God's name! let us be reasonable in our demands, and be content with as little as may be, in the settlement of our dispute."

The Prior listened patiently, as usual, but a hectic glow, for an instant, on his cheek. It disappeared, and the benevolent blue eye was again seen shining amid features that the cloister and the closet had long since robbed of all other bloom. "Ye know, burghers, of Duerckheim," he answered, "that in assailing the altars of Limburg ye set a double power at defiance;—that of the Church, as it is constituted and protected on earth, and that of God. My errand, at this moment, is to speak of the first. Our Father of Worms is sorely angered, and he has not failed to address himself directly and promptly to our Father at Rome. In addition to this reverend appeal, messengers have been dispatched to both the Elector and Emperor, as well as to divers of the Ecclesiastical Princes who rule on the banks of the Rhine. This is a fearful array of power to be met by a mountain baron, and a city whose walls can be measured by the leg in so short a time. But chiefly would I lay stress on the evil that may flow from the displeasure of the Head of the Church."

"And should he read the late exploit with severity, reverend Prior, what are we to look to, as its fruits?"

"To be denounced as excluded from the fold, and to be left to the wickedness and folly of your own hearts. In a word, excommunication."

"Umph!—this might prove a short way of recruiting the followers of Brother Luther! thou knowest, holy Arnolph, that men look more and more closely, every day, into these disputed points."

"Would that they looked with more humility and understanding! If ye consider the denunciations and benedictions of him to whom has been confided the authority to bless and to curse as of little weight, no words of mine can heighten their effect; but all among ye who are not prepared to go the length that your Burgomaster hath just hinted, may deem it prudent to pause, ere they incur the

heavy risk of living under such a weight of Heaven's displeasure."

The burghers regarded each other in doubt, few among them being yet prepared to push resistance so far. Some inwardly trembled, for habit and tradition were too strong for the new opinions; some shrewdly weighed the temporal rather than the spiritual consequences, and others ruminated on the possibility of enduring the anathema in so good company. There are thousands that are willing to encounter danger in large bodies, who shrink from its hazards alone; and perhaps the soldier goes to the charge quite as much stimulated by the sympathy of association, as he is sustained by the dread of shame or the desire of renown. The civic counsellors of Duerckheim now found themselves in some such plight, and each man felt assurance or doubt, much as he happened to meet with either of those feelings expressed in the eyes of his neighbor.

"Have ye any less godly proposition to make?" asked Heinrich, who perceived that the moral part of his civic support began to waver, "for these are points in which we are better skilled than on those that touch your doctrinal niceties."

"I am commanded to say, that, as becomes their divine office, the brotherhood of Limburg is disposed to pardon and forget, inasmuch as duty will allow, the late act of Duerckheim, on conditions that may be named."

"Aye, this is Christian-like, and will meet with a ready return, in our dispositions. On our side, too, holy Prior, there is every wish to forget the past, and to look only to a quiet and friendly future—do I interpret the intentions of the town well, my neighbors?"

"To the letter!—no clerk could do it better."—"Yes, we are of the community's mind; it is wise to live at peace, and to pardon and overlook;" were ready answers to this appeal.

"Thou hearest, Father! a better mood no minister or messenger need wish! 'Fore Heaven! we are all of one mind in this particular; and I know not that the man would find safety in Duerckheim who should talk of aught but peace!"

"It is to be mourned that ye have not always been of this humor; I come not, however, to reproach, but to reclaim; not to defy, but to persuade; not to intimidate, but to convince. Here are the written propositions of the holy

divines by whom I am charged with this office of mediator, and I leave it for a time to your private consultations. When ye shall have well digested this fit offer, I will come among ye in peace and friendliness."

The written proposals were received, and the whole assembly rose to do the Prior honor. As the latter left the hall, he asked permission of several of the burghers, among whom was Heinrich Frey, to visit their families, in the spirit of Christian guardianship. The desired consents were obtained without demur or doubt, on the part of any; for whatever may be said or thought of the errors of public opinion, it is usually right where the means are possessed of at all giving it a true direction. The high estimation in which Arnolph was held, by the mere force of popular instinct, was never more plainly seen than on the present occasion, when even those who had so lately warred against the community, threw open their doors without reserve; though it was well known that the late policy of the town had many a secret enemy, and many a bitter commentator, in that sex which is sometimes as slow to incite to violence and resistance, as at others it is thoughtless and hasty.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"What well-appointed leader fronts us here?"—*King Henry IV.*

THE missive of the monks was written in Latin. At that period few wrote but the learned, and every noble or town was obliged to maintain a scholar to perform what are now the commonest duties of intercourse. The clerkly agent of Duerckheim had been educated for the Church, and had even received the tonsure; but some irregularities of life, which, as it would appear, were not within the pale of clerical privileges, or which had been so unguarded as to bring scandal on the profession, compelled him to give his destinies a new direction. As happens with most men who have expended much time and labor in qualifying themselves for any particular pursuit, and who are unexpectedly driven from its exercise, this individual, who was named Ludwig, and who was often ironically styled in common parlance Father Ludwig, never completely succeeded in repairing the injury done by the first false step

he had made. His acquirement procured for him a certain amount of consideration, but as he was known to be somewhat free in his manner of life, and, especially as schism grew strong in Germany, a bold skeptic on most of the distinctive doctrines of the Catholic Church, he ever wore about his character some of that fancied looseness, which insensibly attaches itself to all renegades, whether their motives be more or less corrupt. Still, as he was known to be instructed, the multitude ascribed more virtue to his secession than it would have imputed to the withdrawal from the fold of fifty sincere believers; for most believed there were means of judging that belonged to the initiated, which did not fall to the lot of those who worshipped in the outer court. We have daily proofs that this weakness reaches into the temporal interests of life, and that opinions are valued in proportion as there is believed to be some secret means of acquiring information; though men rarely conceal anything that they know which may be revealed, and few indeed are disposed to "hide their lights under a bushel."

Ludwig forgot no part of the intonation or emphasis, while he uttered the unintelligible phrases of the monkish missive. His auditors listened the more attentively, because they did not understand a syllable of what was said; attention seeming usually to be riveted in an inverse ratio to the facilities of comprehension. Perhaps some of the higher dignitaries flattered themselves that their inferiors might be duped into the belief of their attainments; a fact that could not fail to increase their influence, since there is no better evidence of the innate aspirations of our intellectual being than the universal deference that is paid to knowledge. We have hazarded this supposition against the civic authorities of Duerckheim, because we believe it depends upon a general principle of human ambition; and because in our own case, we well remember hearing out a sermon of more than an hour's duration delivered in Low Dutch, and in a damp church in Holland, when not a word, from the text to the benediction, was understood.

"Right learnedly worded, and no doubt of proper courtesy!" exclaimed Heinrich, when the letter was ended, and while the clerk was clearing his spectacles, preparatory to the more vulgar version—"It is a happy strife, neighbors, in which such language passes between the parties; for it

proves that charity is stronger than malice, and that reason is not forgotten merely because there have been blows !”

“I have rarely heard braver words,” answered a fellow-burgher, “or those that are better penned !”

“Potz-tausend !” muttered the smith ; “it were almost a sin to dispossess men that can write thus !”

Murmurs of approbation passed through the crowd, and not an individual was there, with the solitary exception of a gaping idiot that had stolen into the hall, who did not affect to have received more or less pleasure from the communication. Even the idiot had his share of satisfaction, for, by the pure force of sympathy, he caught gleamings of a delight that seemed so strong and so general.

Ludwig now commenced translating the letter into the harsh, energetic German of the Rhine. The wonderful capabilities of the language enabled him to convert the generalities and comprehensive terms of the Latin, with a minuteness of signification, which put the loss of any shade of idea utterly out of the question.

What the monks had meant, and perhaps even more, was laboriously, and with malignant pleasure, rendered ; and so rendered, as to give to each expression the fullest weight and meaning.

We have no intention of attempting the office of translating this harsh summons ourselves, but must be content with a brief summary of its contents. The instrument opened with a greeting that was not unlike those which were sent, in the first ages of the present dispensation, from the apostles to the churches of the east. It then contained a short but pointed narrative of the recent events, which were qualified in a way that the reader can easily imagine ; it proceeded to refer to the spiritual and temporal authorities from which the brotherhood had assurances of support ; and it concluded by demanding, under the penalty of incurring every earthly and heavenly risk, an enormous sum in gold, as a pecuniary reparation for the injury done—a complete and absolute submission of the town to the jurisdiction of the community, even more than was ever before pretended to—a public and general acknowledgment of error, with a variety of penances and pilgrimages to be performed by functionaries that were named—and the delivery of Heinrich Frey, with eleven others of the principal inhabitants, into the Abbot’s hands

as hostages, until all of these exactions and conditions should be completely and satisfactorily fulfilled.

"Wh—e—e—e—w!" whistled Heinrich, when Ludwig ended, after a most provoking prolixity, that had completely exhausted the Burgomaster's patience. "Himmel! here is a victory that is likely to cost us our means, our characters, our liberties, our consciences, and our ease! Are the monks mad, Master Ludwig, or art thou sporting with our credulity:—Do they really speak of hostages, and of gold?"

"Of a surety, worshipful Herr, and seemingly with a right good will."

"Wilt read the part touching the hostages again, in the Latin; thou mayest have indiscreetly overlooked a conjunction or a pronoun, as I think thou callest these notable figures of speech."

"Aye, it were well to judge of the letter by the Latin," echoed the smith; "one never knows the quality of his metal, at the first touch of the hammer."

Ludwig read, a second time, extracts in the original, and, through a species of waggery, by which he often took a secret and consolatory revenge for the indignities he frequently received from the ignorant, and which served him as food of merriment and as a vent to his confined humors in occasional interviews with others of his own class, he gave with singular emphasis the terms of greeting, which were, as usual, embellished with phrases of priestly benediction, as the part that especially demanded the prompt delivery of Heinrich Frey and his fellows into the hands of the Benedictines.

"Gott bewahre!" cried the Burgomaster, who had shifted a leg each time the clerk glanced an eye at him over his spectacles—"I have other concerns than to sit in a cell, and Duerckheim would fare but badly were the town left without so large a share of its knowledge and experience. Prithee, Master Ludwig, give us the kinder language of these Benedictines; for methinks there may be found some words of peace in the blessings they bestow."

The crafty clerk now read, in the original, the strongest of the denunciations, and the parts of the letter which so peremptorily demanded the hostages.

"How now, knave!" said the hasty Burgomaster, "thou hast not been faithful in thy former readings. Thou hearest, neighbors, I am named especially in their benedictions;

for you must know, worthy burghers, that Henricus means Heinrich, and Frey well pronounced, is much the same in all languages. This I know from long experience in these cunning instruments. I owe the reverend Benedictines grace for their good wishes, expressed with this particularity; though the manner in which they introduce the hostages is unseemly."

"I thought when it came to the worst," muttered the smith, "that Master Heinrich would be considered with especial favor. This it is, brother artisans, to be honored in one's town, and to have a name!"

"There sounds a parley!" interrupted the Burgomaster. "Can these crafty monks have dared to trifle with us, by sending the choicest of their flock to hold us in discourse, while they steal upon us in armor?"

The idea was evidently unpleasant to most of the council, and to none more so than to the aged Wolfgang, whose years would seem to have given less value to his personal safety than to the rest. Many quitted the hall, while those that remained appeared to be detained more by their apprehensions than by their fortitude. Heinrich, who was constitutionally firm, continued the most undisturbed of them all, though even he went from window to window like a man that was uneasy.

"If the godly villains have done this treachery, let them look to it—we are not vassals to be hoodwinked with a cowl!"

"Perhaps, worshipful and wise Heinrich," said the crafty Ludwig, "they send the trumpet, in readiness to receive the hostages."

"The holy Magi curse them, and their impudent long-winded musician!—How now, fellow!—who maketh this tan—ta—ra—ra—at our gate?"

"The noble Count of Hartenburg is at the valley side of the town, honorable Burgomaster, with a stout troop of mounted followers," announced the breathless runner, who came on this errand. "He chafes at the delay, but as the order to keep fast is so rigid, the captain of the watch dares not unbar and unbolt without permission had."

"Bid the valiant and faithful burgher undo his fastenings, o' Heaven's name!—and right speedily. We should have bethought us, excellent neighbors, of the chances of this visit, and had a care that our princely friend were

without this cause of complaint. But we should rejoice, too, that our people are so true, as to keep their trust even against one so known and honored. I warrant ye, neighbors, were it the imperial Karl himself, he would fare no better——”

Heinrich was interrupted while vaunting and extolling the civic discipline, by the tramping of horses' feet on the pavement below the windows, and on looking out he saw Emich and all his cortége coolly alighting.

“Umph!” ejaculated the Burgomaster—“go forth, and do reverence to my Lord the Count.”

The council awaited in deep silence the appearance of their visitor. Emich entered the hall with the assured step of a superior, and with a countenance that was clouded. He bowed to the salutations of the council, signed for his armed followers to await at the door, and walked himself to the seat which Heinrich had previously vacated, and which in truth was virtually the throne of Duerckheim. Placing his heavy form in the chair, with the air of one accustomed to fill it, he again bowed, and made a gesture of the hand, which the burghers understood to be an invitation to be seated. With doubting faces the awed authorities submitted, receiving that permission as a boon, which they were ready so lately themselves to urge as a civility. Heinrich looked surprised, but, accustomed to pay great deference to his noble friend, he returned the bow and smile—for he was especially saluted with a smile—and took the second place.

“It was not well, my worthy townsmen, to close your gates thus churlishly against me,” commenced the baron; “there are rights and honors that ought to be respected, at all hours and seasons, and I marvel that this need be taught to the Duerckheimers by a Count of Leiningen. I and my train were held at parlance at your barriers, an' we had been so many wandering gipsies, or some of the free bands that sell their arquebuses and lances to the highest bidder!”

“That there may have been some little delay, my Lord Count——” answered Heinrich——

“Little, Burgomaster! dost thou call that little which keeps a noble of Leiningen chafing at a gate, amid dust and heat, and gaping mouths? thou knowest not the spirit of our steeds, Herr Frey, if thou imaginest they like such sudden checks of the curb. We are of high mettle,

horses and riders, and must have our way when fairly spurred!"

"There was every desire, nobly born Emich, to do you honor, and to undo our bolts as speedily as might be done; for this end we were about to depute the necessary orders, when we were suddenly favored with your gracious and high dispensing company. We doubt not that the captain of the watch reasoned with himself, and did that, of good intention and of his own accord, which he would speedily have been called upon to do, by our commands."

"God's truth! that may not prove so true," answered Emich, laughing. "Our impatience was stronger than your bolts, and lest the same oversight might renew the inconvenience, we found means to enter with little formality."

The burghers in general seemed greatly troubled, and Heinrich as greatly surprised. The baron saw that enough had been said for the moment; and assuming a more gracious mien, he continued in another strain.

"Well, loving townsmen," he said, "it is now a happy week, since all our desires have been accomplished. The Benedictines are defeated, the Jaegerthal is at peace and under the sway of its rightful lord, and yet the sun rises and sets as before, the heavens seem as smiling, the rains as refreshing, and all our hopes as reasonable as of old! There is to be no miracle in their behalf, Herr Heinrich, and we may fain sleep in peace."

"That may depend, Lord Count, on other humors than ours. Here are reports abroad that are anything but pleasant to the ear, and our honest townsmen are troubled lest, after doing good service in behalf of their betters, they may yet be made to pay all the charges of the victory."

"Set their hearts at peace, worthy Burgomaster, for I have not thrust a hand into the ecclesiastical flame, without thought of keeping it from being scorched. Thou knowest I have friends, and 'twill not be easy to put a Count of Leiningen to the ban."

"Nay, we doubt but little, illustrious noble, of your safety, and of your house's; our fear is for ourselves."

"Thou hast only to lean on me, Master Frey. When the tie between us shall be explained more clearly to the Emperor and the Diet, and when our loving wishes, as respects each other, shall be better understood, all will know

that to strike Duerckheim is to aim a blow at me. Whence cometh this sudden fear, for last reports touching your condition said that the town was firm of heart, and bent on joining Luther, rather than confess?"

"Sapperment! the heart must not always be judged by the countenance! Here is the smith, who is seldom of a bright visage, but were it said that his heart is as black as his face, great injustice would be done the man."

A movement and a murmur betrayed the admiration of those who crowded the door, at this figure of the Burgo-master.

"Thou hast some reason for this sudden despondency?" rejoined the Count, glancing a look of indifference at the artisans.

"Why, to speak the truth, Lord Emich, Bonifacius hath sent us a missive, written in very fair Latin, and in a scholarly manner, that threatens us to a man with every Christian wish, from plagues to downright incurable damnation."

"And art thou troubled, Heinrich, at a scrawl of unintelligible words!"

"I know not what is to be understood, Herr Count, if a demand for Heinrich Frey, with eleven others of our most respected, as hostages, doubtless to be kept from their affairs in some convent cells, on hard fare, and hard penance, for weary months, be not plain! To this they add demands for gold, with pilgrimages, and penances, and other godly recreations."

"By whose hand got ye this?"

"By that of the honest Prior, a man of so much bowels, that I marvel he should be the bearer of a message so unwelcome and so uncharitable. But the best of us have our moments of weakness, for all are not always thoughtful or just."

"Ha! Arnolph is afoot!—Hath he departed?"

"He tarries, my good lord; for look you, we have not yet determined on the fashion of our reply."

"Thou wouldst not have thought of sending answer, without taking counsel of me, Herr Frey!" said Emich, sharply, and much in the manner that a parent reproves his child. "I am luckily arrived, and the matter shall be looked to. Have ye bethought ye of the fitting terms?"

"No doubt all have bethought them much, though as yet, none have uttered their secret opinions. For one, I

cry out loudly against all hostages, though none could be readier than I to undergo this risk to serve the town ; but it is admitting an error in too plain evidence, and carrieth with it a confession that our faith is not to be depended on."

This sentiment, which had long been struggling in Heinrich's breast, met with an audible echo in that of everyone of the eleven who were likely, by situation and years, to be chosen for this honorable distinction ; and every man among them uttered some proper phrase concerning the value of character, and the necessity of so demeaning themselves, as not to cheapen that of Duerckheim. Emich listened coolly, for it was of great indifference to him how much the burghers were alarmed, since their fears could only induce them the more to seek support from his interest and power.

"Thou hast then refused the conditions ?"

"We have done nothing, Herr Count, but we have thought much and sorely, as hath just been said. I take it, the gold and the hostages will find but little favor among us ; but, rather than keep the Palatinate in a disturbed and insecure state, and as we are quiet burghers, who look to peace and the means of getting their bread, our answer may not be so short, could the matter be brought down to a few chosen penitents and pilgrimages. Though half of Brother Luther's mind in many things, it were well to get quit of even the chances of damnation, for a few sore feet and stripes, that might be so managed as to do little civic harm."

"By the lineage of my house ! excellent Heinrich, thou dost but echo my thoughts. The Prior is a man with bowels, and this matter shall be speedily arranged. We must bethink us of the details, for these monks are close calculators, and on a time are said to have outwitted Lucifer. First then, there shall be an offering of gold."

"Nay, my Lord Count will consider the means of our town !"

"Peace, honest Heinrich," whispered Emich, leaning toward the place where the Burgomaster and two or three of the principal members of the council sat—"We have accounts from the Hebrews at Koeln, which say the Limburg treasures may be well applied, in this manner, to purchase a little peace. We will be liberal as becomes our names," he now spoke to all, "and not send the brother-

hood naked into a world, which is getting every day less disposed to clothe them ; we must drain our coffers rather than they should starve, and this point may be looked upon as settled. As for our penitents and pilgrims, the castle and the town shall equally furnish a share. I can send the lieutenant of my men-at-arms, who hath a nimble foot—Gottlob the cow-herd, to whom punishment is fairly due, on many general accounts—and others doubtless that may be found. What good, of this nature, can Duerckheim supply ?”

“We are a homely people, high-born Graf, and having fewer virtues than our betters, are not so well gifted either in vices. As becometh a middle state, we are content with no great excess in the one or the other of the more striking qualities ; and yet I doubt not, neighbors, that at need there might be among us men who would not fare the worse for wholesome correction and fitting penances ?”

Heinrich looked about him, in an inquiring manner, while each burgher passed the investigation on to the next, as men forward a glance that they wish to think has no application to themselves. The crowd at the door recoiled a pace, and heads were turned curiously, and eyes roamed among the inferiors, with quite as much expression as had just been done by their superiors.

“There are delinquents, young and thoughtless varlets, who vex the town with their ribaldry and noise, that it might do to scourge with the Church’s rod,”—suggested the tremulous and aged Wolfgang.

“St. Benedict will be put off with none of these,” bluffly answered the Burgomaster ; “he must have men of substance and of some esteem, or the affair will be as far as ever from a happy conclusion. What thinkest thou, honest and patriotic Dietrich ?—Thou hast a constitution to endure, and a heart of iron.”

“Tausend sex und zwanzig !” returned the smith ; “you little know all my ailings, most worshipful masters, if you think I am near this force ! I have difficulties of breath, that are only at peace near the heat of the forge, and my heart gets soft as a feather on a journey. Then there is the wife and the young to wail my absence, and I am not scholar enough to repeat a prayer more than some six or ten times in a day.”

This excuse did not appear to satisfy the council, who, acting on that principle of exaction which is found among

all people and in all communities, felt disposed to recollect the former services of the artisan, as a sort of apology for further claims on his exertions.

"Nay, for one that hath ever been so free at the wish of Duerckheim, this plea cometh with an ill grace," answered Heinrich,—a sentiment that was audibly repeated in a general exclamation of discontent by all the other burghers.—"We expected other reply from thee!"

"Well, since the worshipful council expects—but there will be the wife and the young, with none to care for them!"

"That difficulty may be disposed of—thou hast six, if I remember, in thy household?"

"Ten, honorable Heinrich—not a mouth less than half a score, and all of an age to require much food and strong."

"Here are all but two of our dozen, in a word, noble Emich," promptly added the Burgomaster; "and of a scriptural quality, for we are told, the prayers and sacrifices of the young and innocent are acceptable. Thanks, honest smith, and more than thanks: thou shalt have marks of a quality different from those left by the scourge. No doubt the others may be picked up among the useless and idle."

"Our affairs seem settled, loving burghers," answered the Count. "Leave me to dispose of the question of indemnity, and look ye to the penitents, and to the seemliness of the atonement. Ye may retire, ye that throng the way."—The mandate was hurriedly obeyed, and the door closed.—"As for support at Heidelberg and Madrid," continued the Count, "the matter hath been looked to; and should the complaint be pushed beyond decency at Rome, we have always Brother Luther as an ally. Bonifacius wanteth not for understanding, and when he looks deeper into our defences, and into the humor of the times, I know him for one that will be disposed to stay an evil, before it becomes an incurable sore. These shaven crowns, Master Heinrich, are not like us fathers of families, much troubled for posterity; for they leave no name or blood behind them; and so long as we can fairly satisfy their present longings, the truce may be considered as more than half concluded. To strip a churchman of his hoardings, needeth but a bold spirit, a present bribe, and strong hand."

The whole council murmured its approval of this rea-

soning, and the discussion now took a turn more inclining to the details.

Emich grew gracious, and the burghers bolder. Some even laughed openly at their late apprehensions, and nearly all thought they saw a final settlement of this long-disputed and serious question. The Prior, who had been engaged in visits of religious charity in the town, was soon summoned, and the Count assumed the office of communicating the common answer.

The meeting between Emich and Father Arnolph was characteristic. It took place in the public hall, and in the presence of a few of the principal burghers. The Count was at first disposed to be haughty, imperious, and even repulsive; but the Monk was meek, earnest, and calm. The effect of this forbearance was quickly apparent. Their intercourse soon grew more courteous, for Emich, when not excited, or misled by the cupidity that disgraced the age, possessed most of the breeding of his peers. On the other hand, Arnolph never lost sight of his duties, the chiefest of which he believed to be charity.

"Thou art the bearer of the olive branch, holy Prior," said the Count, as they took their seats, after some little previous parley; "and pity 'tis, that all who wear the cowl, did not as well comprehend the pleasantest quality of their sacred characters. The world would grow less quarrelsome, and we who worship in the court of the temple, would be less disturbed by doubts touching those who lift its veil."

"I did not look to hold discussion of clerklly duties with thee, Lord Count, when my superior sent me on this errand to the town of Duerckheim," mildly answered the monk, indifferent to the other's wily compliments. "Am I, then, to consider the castle and the council as one?"

"In heart, humor, and interests;—I might add also, in rights and sovereignty; for, now all question of the Abbey is settled, the ancient temporal rule is replaced.—Say I well, loving burghers?"

"Umph!" ejaculated Heinrich. The rest bent their heads, though doubtingly, like men taken by surprise. But Emich seemed perfectly satisfied.

"It is of no great moment who governs here, since the wrong done to God and our brotherhood must be repaired by those who have committed it. Hast thou examined the

missive of the Abbey, Herr Burgomaster, and art ready with the reply?"

"This duty hath been done, reverend Arnolph, and here is our answer. As for the letter, it is our mature opinion, that it hath been indited in a fair hand, and in very learned Latin, as befitteth a brotherhood of so much repute. We deem this more creditable, since there have been some late heavy losses in books, and he who did this might not have the customary aid of materials to which use had made him familiar. As for what hath been said in the way of greeting and benedictions, holy Prior, we are thankful, and most especially for the part that is of thy share, which we esteem to be of particular unction; in mine own behalf, especially would I thank all of the convent for the manner in which my name hath been introduced into their good wishes; though I must add, it were better that he who wrote had been content to stop there, since these frequent introductions of private personages, in matters of general concernment, are apt to raise envy and other evil passions. As respecting, moreover, any especial pilgrimages and penances in my own person, I feel not the occasion, as would doubtless be the fact at need, since we see most men pricked on to these mortifications by their own consciences."

"The expiation is not sought for particular consolation, neither is it desired as a balm to the Convent's wounds, but as an humble and a necessary atonement to God. In this view have we deemed it important to choose those who are most esteemed among men, since it is before the eyes of mankind that the expiation must be made. I am the bearer of similar proposals to the Castle, and, by high ecclesiastical authority, am I charged to demand that its well-born lord, himself, make these acknowledgments in his own person. The sacrifice of the honored and innocent hath more flavor than that of the mean and wicked."

"Potz Tausend!" muttered Heinrich.—"I see little use for leading a clean life with such doctrines and discipline!"

But Emich heard the proposal without a frown. Bold, haughty, and audacious, he was also deeply artful and superstitious. For years, his rude mind had been tormented by conflicting passions—those of cupidity and religious dread; and now that the former was satisfied, he had begun to reflect seriously of appeasing his latent ap-

prehensions in some effectual manner. Plans of various expiatory offerings had already crossed his mind, and so far from hearing the declaration of the Benedictine with resentment, he entertained the idea with pleasure. It seemed an easy and cheap expedient of satisfying all scruples ; for the re-establishment of the community on the hill of Limburg was a condition he knew to be entirely out of the question, in the present state of the public mind in Germany. In this humor, then, did he reply. The conference of course proceeded harmoniously, and it was protracted for several hours. But as its results will be more regularly developed in the course of the narrative, we shall not anticipate events.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“ In a strange land
Such things, however trivial, reach the heart,
And through the heart the head, clearing away
The narrow notions that grew up at home,
And in their place grafting good-will to all.”—ROGERS.

It is necessary to advance a few weeks in the order of time ; a change that will bring us to the middle of the warm and generous month of July. The hour was towards the close of day, and the place and scenery such as it is now our duty to describe.

Let the reader imagine a high naked down, whose surface was slightly broken by irregularities. Scarce a tree was visible over the whole of its bald face, though a few stunted shrubs betrayed the efforts of the earth to push forth a meagre vegetation. The air was pure, thin, and volatile, and, together with the soft blue of the void, denoted a great elevation above the vapors and impurities which linger nearer to regions that lie on the level of the sea. Notwithstanding these never-failing signs of a mountain country, here and there were to be seen distant peaks, that shot upward into the fierce light, glittering with everlasting frost. Along one side of this naked expanse, the land fell suddenly away, towards a long, narrow sheet of water, which lay a thousand feet below. The shores of this lake, for such it was, were clothed with innumer-

able white dwellings, and garnished with hamlets and vineyards, while a walled town, with its towers and battlements, occasionally darkened the shores. But these were objects scarcely to be seen, from the precise situation which we desire the mind of the reader to occupy. In the distant view, always in that direction, one favorably placed might have seen a vast range of undulating country, stretching towards the north and east, that had the usual characteristics of a region in which Alpine mountains begin gradually to melt into the plain. This region was beautified with several spots of dark blue, resembling so many deep reflections of the skies, which were sheets of limpid and tranquil water. Towards the south and west, the down was bounded by a natural wall of rude and gray rock, that rose, in nearly all its line, to the elevation of a mountain, and which shot up to a giddy height, near its centre, in two pointed cones, that, by their forms, coupled with other circumstances that shall be soon explained, had obtained the name of the "Mitres."

Near the barrier of mountain, and almost directly beneath these natural mitres, was a small village, whose houses, constructed of wood, had the wide roofs, numerous windows, and the peculiar resin-like color of Swiss habitations.

The place was a hamlet, rather than a village, and most of the land around it lay at waste, like all that was visible for miles, in every direction. On a rising ground near the hamlet, from which it was separated merely by a large esplanade, or green, as we should be apt to term the spot, stood one of those mazes of roofs, chimneys, and towers, which in that age, and indeed, even now, mark a conventual pile. The edifices were large, complicated in their forms and order, and had been constructed without much architectural knowledge or taste; the air of the whole being that of rude but abundant wealth. In the centre was a church, or chapel, evidently of ancient existence and simple origin, though its quaint outlines were elaborately decorated, after the fashion of the times, by a variety of after-thoughts, in a manner to show that means were not wanting to render the whole more magnificent, and that the fault of the construction lay rather in the first idea, than in any subsequent ability or inclination to repair it.

The site of this hamlet and down was in the celebrated Canton of Schwytz, a small district that has since given its

name to the heroic confederation that occupies so much of the country among and near the Western Alps. Its name was Einsiedlen; the monastic buildings belonged to a convent of Benedictines, and the church contained one of the shrines even then most in repute, after that of Loretto. Time and revolutions have since elevated our Lady of Einsiedlen, perhaps, to the very highest rank among the pilgrimages of the Catholic; for we have lately seen thousands crowding her altars, while we found the Santa Casa abandoned chiefly to the care of its guardians, or subject to the casual inspection of curious heretics.

Having thus described the spot to which the scene is shifted, it is proper to refer to the actors.

At a point distant less than a league from the hamlet, and on the side of the open down just mentioned, which lies next to the steep ascent from the lake of Zurich, and in the direction of the Rhine, there came a group of travellers of both sexes, and apparently of all ages between declining manhood and vigorous youth. They were afoot, wearing the garb and symbols of pilgrims. Weariness had caused them to lengthen their line, and they went in pairs, the strongest in front, the feeble and more fatigued in the rear.

In advance marched two men. One wore the gown and cowl of a Benedictine, while he carried, like the rest, the staff and wallet of a pilgrim. His companion had the usual mantle decorated with scallop shells, and also bore his scrip and stick. The others had the same attire, with the usual exceptions that distinguish the sexes. They consisted of two men of middle age, who followed those in front; two of each sex in pairs, all still young and active; two females, who were in their prime, though wearied and sad; and a maiden, who dragged her limbs after them with a difficulty disproportioned to her years. At the side of the latter was a crone, whose infirmities and age had enabled her to obtain the indulgence of an ass, on which she was seated comparatively at her ease; though, by a license that had been winked at by the monk, her saddle was encumbered with the scrips of most of the female penitents. In the rear of all came two males, who seemed to form a sort of rear guard to the whole party.

This group was composed of the Prior and Emich, who led the van; of Heinrich, and Dietrich, the smith; of Gisela and Gottlob, with a youth and maiden from Duerck-

heim ; of Ulrike and Lottchen, of Meta and Ilse, and of M. Latouche and the Knight of Rhodes. These were the penitents chosen to expiate the late offence to the majesty of God, by prayers and mortifications before the shrine of Einsiedlen. The temporal question had been partially put at rest, by the intrigues and influence of the Count, backed, as he was, by timely applications of gold, and by the increasing heresy that had effectually shaken the authority of the Church throughout all Germany, and which had sufficiently apprized the practised Bonifacius, and his superiors, of the expediency of using great moderation in their demands.

"St. Benedict make us thankful, holy father !" said the Count, as his gratified eye first beheld the long-wished-for roofs of the Convent.—"We have journeyed a weary distance ; and this snail's pace, which, in deference to the weak, we are bound to observe, but little suits the impatience of a warrior accustomed to steed and spur. Thou hast often visited this sacred shrine, pious Arnolph ?"

The Monk had stopped, and with a tearful eye he stood gazing, in religious reverence, at the distant pile. Then kneeling on the grass, he prayed, while the others, accustomed to these sudden demonstrations of zeal, gladly rested their limbs, the while.

"Never before hath eye of mine greeted yon holy pile," answered the Prior, as they slowly resumed their journey ; "though often, in night dreams, hath my soul yearned for the privilege !"

"Methinks, Father, thou hast little occasion for penitence or pilgrimage :—thou, whose life hath rolled on in deeds of Christian charity and love."

"Each day brings its evil, and each day should have its expiation."

"Truly, not in marches over stony and mountain paths, like these we travel. Einsiedlen must have especial virtue, to draw men so far from their homes to do it honor. Hast the history of the shrine at command, reverend Prior ?"

"It should be known to all Christians, and chiefly to the pilgrim. I had thought thee instructed in these great events !"

"By the Magi !—to speak thee honestly, Father Arnolph, the little friendship which hath subsisted between Limburg and my house, had given a disrelish for any

Benedictine miracle, let it be of what quality it would ; but now that we are likely to be so lovingly united, I could gladly hear the tale, which will at least serve to divert our thoughts from a subject so grovelling as our own feet ; for to conceal nothing, mine make most importunate appeals to be at rest !”

“ Our journey draweth near its end ; but, as thy request is reasonable, it shall be answered. Listen, then, Emich, and may the lesson profit thy soul ! During the reign of the illustrious and warlike Charlemagne, who governed Gaul, with so much of our Germany and the country of the Franks, there lived a youth of the ancient family of Hohenzollern, branches of which still possess principalities and marches in the empire. The name of this learned and pious youth was Meinard. Early fatigued with the vanities of life, he sought a hermitage, nearer than this to the banks of that lake which we so lately crossed at Rapperschwyl. But, overburdened by the number of the curious and pious who visited his cell, the holy Meinard, after seven years of prayer, retired to a clear fountain, which must still run near yonder church, where another cell and a chapel were built for him, expressly by command of Hildegarde, a royal lady, and the Abbess of a monastery in the town of Zurich. Here Meinard lived and here he died, filled with grace, and greatly blessed by godly exercises.”

“ Father, had he a profitable and happy end, in this wild region !”

“ Spiritually, nothing could have been more desirable ; temporally, naught more foul. He died by the hands of vile assassins, to whom he had rendered hospitality. The deed was discovered by means of two crows, who followed the murderers to Zurich, where they were taken and executed—at least, so sayeth tradition. In a later age, the holy Meinard was canonized by Benedict VIII. For nearly half a century, the cell of Meinard, though in great request as a place of prayer, remained without a tenant ; but at the end of that period, Beurun, a canon of the house of Burgundy, which house then ruled most of the country far and near, caused the chapel and cell to be repaired, replaced the image of the blessed Maria, and devoted his own life to the hermitage. The neighboring Seigneurs and Barons contributed to endow the place, and divers holy men joined themselves to the service of the altar, from which circumstance the shrine obtained the name of our

'Lady of the Hermits,' its true appellation to this hour. It would weary thee to listen to the tale of miracles performed in virtue of their prayers, even in that early and less gifted condition of the place; but its reputation so circulated that many came from afar to see and to believe. In the process of time, a regular community was established, and the church thou seest was erected, containing in its nave the original cell, chapel, and image of Saint Meinard. Of the brotherhood, Saint Eberhaud was named the Abbot."

"I had thought there was still higher virtue in the place!" observed Emich, when the Prior paused, and seemingly a little disappointed; for your deep sinner as little likes a simple dispensation, as the drunkard relishes small drinks.

"Thou shalt hear. When the buildings were completed, and it became necessary to consecrate the place, agreeably to the forms and usages of the Church, Conrad Bishop of Constance, was invited to discharge the holy office. Here cometh the wonderful favor of Heaven! As Conrad of Constance, with other pious men, arose to pray, at midnight of the day appointed for the service, they suddenly heard divine music most sweetly chanted by angels. Though sore amazed and impressed, they were still sufficiently masters of their reason to discover that the unseen beings sang the prescribed formula of the consecration, that office which they were preparing themselves to perform a few hours later. Satisfied with this especial and wonderful interference, Conrad would have abstained from repeating a service which had already been thus performed, but for the demands and outcries of the ignorant. But when, after hours of delay, he was about to yield to their impatience, a clear voice three times admonished him of the blasphemy, by saying, 'Cease, brother! thy chapel is divinely consecrated!' From that moment the place is so esteemed, and all our rites are performed as at a shrine of high behest and particular virtue."

Emich crossed himself devoutly, having listened in perfect faith, and with deep interest;—for at that moment early impressions were stronger than the modern doubts.

"It is good to be here, father," he reverently answered; "I would that Ermengarde, and all of my house, were at my side! But are there any especial favors accorded to those who come hither, in a fitting temper, in the way of

temporal gifts or political considerations; since, being before a shrine so holy, I could fain profit by the sore pains and privations by which the grace is gained?"

The Prior seemed mortified, for, though he lent the faith required by the opinions of the age to the tradition he had recounted, he was too well instructed in the true doctrines of his Church not to perceive the false bias of his companion's mind. The embarrassment caused a silence, during which the reader is to imagine that they passed on, giving place to other personages of the tale.

Before turning to another group, however, we desire to say distinctly, that, in relating the manner of the miraculous consecration of the chapel of 'Our Lady of the Hermits,' we have wished merely to set the tradition before the reader without inferring aught for, or against, its authenticity. It is well known that the belief of these supernatural interferences of Divine Power forms no necessary part of doctrine, even in that Church which is said to be the most favored by these dispensations; and it ought always to be remembered that those sects which impugn these visible and physical signs of Omnipotence, entertain opinions of a more purely spiritual character, that are scarcely less out of the course of ordinary and vulgar nature. In cases in which there exist so nice shades of distinction, and in which truth is so difficult of discovery, it is our duty to limit ourselves to popular facts, and as such have we given the history of Einsiedlen, its Abbey, and its Virgin. The opinion of Father Arnolph is the local opinion of our own times, and it is the opinion of thousands who, even now, yearly frequent the shrine.

Heinrich and the smith were the couple next to the Count and the Prior, and of course they were the next to cross the stage.

"It is no doubt much, or I may add altogether as you say, Worshipful Burgomaster——"

"Brother Pilgrim," ruefully interrupted Heinrich.

"I should have said, Brother Worshipful Pilgrim,—though, Heaven it knows, the familiarity goes nigh to choke me!—but it is much as you say, that whether we cling to Rome, or finally settle quietly into the new worship of Brother Luther, this journey ought, in all fairness, to be set down to our account, as of so much virtue; for, look you, Brother Worshipful, it is made at the cost of

Christian flesh and blood, and therefore should it be savory, without much particularity concerning mere outward appearances. I do not think, were truth spoken, that wielding the sledge a twelve-month would have done this injury to my feet !”

“Have mercy on thyself and me, good smith, and think less of these trifling grievances. What Heaven wills must happen, else would one of thy merit have risen higher in the world.”

“Thanks, Worshipful Brother Pilgrim and Burgomaster ; I will bethink me of resignation, though these wire-drawn pains are never to the liking of your men of muscle and great courage. A knock o’ the head, or the bullet of an arquebuse gives less uneasiness than smaller griefs much endured. Were things properly governed, the penances and pilgrimages, and other expiations of the Church, would be chiefly left to the women.”

“We shall see hereafter how Luther hath ordered this ; but having ourselves embarked in this journey for the good of Duerckheim, to say nothing of our own souls, it behooveth us to hold out manfully ;—a duty the more easily performed, as we can now see the end of it. To speak thee fair, Dietrich, I do not remember ever to have beheld Benedictine abode with so much joy as this we see at yonder mountain’s foot !”

“Be of cheer, most honorable and excellent Brother Worshipful Pilgrim ; the trial is near its end, and if we come thus far to do this honor to our own community, why,—Himmel ! it is but the price paid for getting rid of another !”

“Be of cheer, truly, brother smith, for it is but some kneeling, and a few stripes that each is to apply to his own back ; after which the return will reasonably be more joyous than the advance.”

Encouraged by each other, the devotees hobbled on, their heavy massive frames yielding at every step, like those of overgrown oxen which had been but indifferently shod. As they passed by, their places were filled by the four, of whom Gisela and Gottlob formed a part. Among these the discourse was light and trifling, for bodily fatigue had little influence on the joyous buoyancy of such spirits ; especially at a moment when they saw before them the immediate termination of their troubles. Not so with those that came next ; these were Ulrike and her friend, who

moved along the path, like those who were loaded with griefs of the soul.

"God is among these hills, as he is on our plains, Lottchen!" said the former, continuing the discourse. "Yon temple is his shrine, as was that of Limburg; and it is as vain for man to think of forgetting him on earth, as it would be to invade him in that Heaven which is His throne! What he doth is wise, and we will endeavor to submit."

The words of Ulrike were perhaps more touched with resignation than her manner. The latter, though subdued, was filled with sorrow, and her voice was tremulous nearly to tears. Though the exhibition of her melancholy was deep and evident, it was of a character which denotes no extinction of hope. On the other hand, the features, eye, and entire manner of her friend, bore the heavy and fatal impress of incurable woe.

"God is among these hills!" repeated Lottchen, though she scarce seemed to hear the words; "God is among these hills!"

"We approach a much-esteemed shrine, dearest Lottchen; the Being, in whose name it hath been raised, will not permit us to depart from it unblest."

"We shall be blessed, Ulrike!"

"Thou dwellest hopelessly on thy loss, my Lottchen! Would thou had less thought of the past, and more of the future!"

The smile with which the widow regarded her friend was full of anguish.

"I have no future, Ulrike, but the grave!"

"Dearest Lottchen!—we will speak of this holy shrine!" Emotion smothered her voice.

"Speak of what thou wilt, my friend," answered the childless widow, with a frightful calm. "I see no difference in subjects."

"Lottchen!—not when we discourse of Heaven!"

The widow bowed her vacant eyes to earth, and they passed on. Their footsteps were succeeded by those of the beast ridden by Ilse, and by the faltering tread of Meta.

"Aye,—yon is the shrine of our Lady of the Hermits!" said the former; "a temple of surpassing virtue! Well, Heaven is not in churches and chapels, and that of Limburg may yet be spared; the more especially as the brotherhood was far from being of unexceptionable lives. Keep

up thy heart, Meta, and think not of weariness, for not a pain dost thou now bear that will not be returned to thee, another day, in joy, or in some other precious gift. This is Heaven's justice, which is certain to requite all equally, for good or evil. Well-a-day!—it is this certainty that comforteth the godly, and giveth courage to the tottering."

She spoke to an insensible listener. The countenance of Meta, like that of Lottchen, expressed hopelessness, though it were in less palpable and certain signs. The eye was dull but wandering, the cheek pale, the mouth convulsive and at times compressed, the step languid, and the whole being of this young and innocent creature seemed wasting under a premature and unnatural blight! She looked at the convent with indifference, though it brought relief to her bodily pains. The mountains rose dark and rugged near, or glittered in the distance like hills of alabaster, without giving birth to a single exclamation of that delight which these scenes are known to excite in young breasts; and even the pure void above was gazed at, though it seemed to invite to a more tranquil existence, with vacuity and indifference.

"Ah's me!" continued Ilse, whose observation rarely penetrated beyond her own feelings, and whose tongue was never known to wax weary—"Ah's me! Meta. O! it must be a wicked world that needs all these pilgrimages and burnings. But they are only types, child, of the past and of the future; of the 'has been,' and of the 'to come.' First, life is a pilgrimage, and a penance; though few of us think so while journeying on its way; but so it is to all; especially to the little favored—but a penance it is, by means of our ailings and other infirmities, particularly in age; and therefore do I bear with it cheerfully, since penances are to be borne; and the burnings of convents and villages are types of the burnings of the wicked. Thou dost not answer, child?"

"Dost think, nurse, that they who die by fire are blessed!"

"Of what art speaking, Meta!—Poor Berchthold Hintermayer perished, as thou knowest, in the flames of Limburg; so did Father Johan, and so did one, far more evil than either!—Oh! I could reveal secrets, an' I had not a prudent tongue! But wisdom lieth in prudence, and I say naught; therefore, Meta, be thou silent."

"I will obey thee, nurse."

The tones of the girl trembled, and the smile with which she gladly acquiesced in the demand of Ilse was such as the sinking invalid gives the kind attendant.

"Thou art dutiful, and it is a merit. I never knew thee more obedient and less given to merriment or girlish exclamations, than on this very pilgrimage; all of which shows that thy mind is in a happy state for these holy offices. Well-a-day!—the pious Arnolph has halted, and now we are about, in sooth, to reap the virtue of all our labors. Oh! an' I had been a monk, thou wouldest have had a leader!"

Ilse beat the sides of the patient animal she rode, and Meta toiled after, as well as her trembling limbs permitted. The Knight and the Abbé came last.

"Thou hast made many of these pious expiations, reverend Abbé?" observed the former, when they had risen the hill, which commanded a view of the convent.

"Never another. Had not chance made me an innocent participator in the destruction of Limburg, this indignity would have been spared."

"How! callest thou a pilgrimage, and prayer at a shrine, an indignity?—thou, a churchman!"

"Gallant Knight, I speak to thee as to a comrade of many days, and of weary passages; as one enlightened. Thou knowest the constitution of earth, and the divers materials that compose society. We have doctrines for all; but practices must be mitigated, like medicaments to the sick. Your pilgrimage is well enough for the peasant, or the citizen, or even for your noble of the Provinces, but their merit is much questioned among us of the capitals—unless, indeed, there should mingle some hope for the future; but penance for deeds accomplished we hold to be supererogatory."

"By my rapier! no such doctrine was in vogue at Rhodes, where all ordinances were much respected, and uniformly admitted."

"And had ye then these familiar practices of religion in your daily habits, Sir Knight?"

"I say not in practice; but ever in admission. Thou knowest the distinction, Sir Abbé, between the purity of doctrine, and some constructions of practice."

"That doubtless. Were we to tie the gentle down to all the observances and exactions of a severe theory, there

would grow up numberless inconveniences. For myself, had it been possible to preserve the ecclesiastical character, without penance under the odium of this unhappy but accidental visit to our host the Count, I could have dispensed with the last act of the drama."

"'Tis whispered, Herr Latouche, my cousin bethought him, that the presence of an ecclesiastic might prove a cloak to his intentions, and that we owe the pleasure of thy agreeable society to a policy that is deeper than chance!"

Albrecht of Viederbach laughed, as he intimated this ruse of Emich; and his companion, who had long perceived how completely he had been the dupe of his host, for in truth he knew nothing previously of the intended assault, was fain to make the best of his situation. He laughed, in his turn, as the loose of principle make light of any misadventure that may happen to be the consequence of their laxity of morals; and, pressing each other, on their several parts in the late events, the two proceeded leisurely towards the spot where the Prior and Emich, as leaders of the party, had now come to a halt. We shall profit by the occasion to make some necessary explanations.

We are too much accustomed in this Protestant country, to believe, that most of the piety of those who profess the religion of Rome consists in externals. When the great antiquity of this Church shall be remembered, as well as the general tendency, in the early ages, to imitate the forms and habits of their immediate predecessors, it should not occasion surprise if some observances were retained, that cannot very clearly be referred, either to apostolic authority or to reason. The promulgation of abstract truth does not necessarily infer a departure from those practices which have become of value by use, even though they may not materially assist in the attainment of the great end. We have inherited many of the vestments and ceremonies, which are retained in the Protestant churches, from Pagan priests; nor is there any sufficient motive for abandoning them, so long as they aid the decencies of worship, without weakening its real objects. The Pagans themselves probably derived some of these very practices, from those whom we are taught to believe held direct communion with God, and who should have best known in what manner to render human adoration most acceptable to the ruler of the universe.

In this country, Catholicism, in its limited and popular

meaning, is no longer catholic, since it is in so small a minority as to have no perceptible influence on the opinions or customs of the country. The outward symbols, the processions, and all the peculiar ceremonies of the Romish Church, are confined to the temples, and the eye rarely or never meets any evidence of its existence beyond their walls. But in Europe the reverse is altogether the case, more particularly in those countries in which the spiritual sway of the head of the Church has not been interrupted by any adventitious changes, proceeding from political revolutions, or other powerful causes. The crucifix, the spear, the cock, the nails, and the sponge, are erected at cross-roads,—chapels dedicated to Mary are seen near many a spring, or at the summit of some weary mountain; while the usual symbols of redemption are found scattered along the highways, marking the site of some death by accident, or the scene of a murder.

In no part of the other hemisphere are these evidences of faith and zeal more common than in the Catholic cantons of Switzerland. Hermitages are still frequent among the rugged rocks of that region, and it is usual to see near these secluded abodes a sort of minor chapel, that is termed, in ordinary language, a "station." These stations are so many tabernacles raised by the way-side, each containing a representation of one of the twelve sufferings of Christ. They are met equally on the side of Vesuvius, overlooking the glorious sea and land of that unequalled country; among the naked wastes of the Apennines; or buried in gorgeous groves; as accident may have determined their location. In some of the valleys of Switzerland, these little tabernacles dot the mountain side for miles, indicating by zig-zag lines and white walls the path that leads from the village beneath to some shrine, that is perhaps perched on the pinnacle of a naked rock, or which stands on a spur of the nearest range.

The shrine of Einsiedlen possessed the usual number of these tabernacles, stretching along the path that communicated with the lake of Zurich. They were designated in the customary manner; each alluding to some one of those great personal afflictions that preceded the crucifixion, and each having sentences of holy writ, to incite the pious to devotion. Here the pilgrims ordinarily commenced the worship peculiar to the place, and it was here that the Prior now awaited his companions.

CHAPTER XXV.

“Was Godde to serche our hertes andreines,
The best were synners grete ;
Christ's vycarr only knowes no synne,
Ynne alle thys mortall state.”—CHATTERTON.

WHEN all were arrived, the pilgrims divided themselves along the path, some kneeling before one tabernacle, and some at another. Ulrike and Lottchen, followed by the pallid Meta, prayed long at each in succession. The other females imitated their example, though evidently with less zeal and earnestness. The Knight of Rhodes and Monsieur Latouche limited their observances to a few genuflexions, and much rapid crossing of themselves with the fingers, appearing to think their general professions of faith possessed a virtue that superseded the necessity of any extraordinary demonstrations of piety. Heinrich and the smith were more particular in showing respect for the prescribed forms ; the latter, who was secretly paid by his townsmen for what he did, feeling himself bound in honor to give them the worth of their money, and the Burgomaster, in addition to his looking for great temporal advantages from the whole affair, being much influenced by paternal regard for Duerckheim. As for Ilse, none was more exact than she ; and, we may add, none more ostentatious.

“Hast bethought thee, Dietrich, to say an extra word in behalf of the general interests?” demanded Heinrich, while he patiently awaited the removal of the other, from before the last tabernacle, in order to assume the post himself.

“Nay, worshipful Burgomaster——”

“Brother Pilgrim, good smith !”

“Nay, worshipful brother, and good pilgrim, there was no question of this duty in the understanding.”

“Himmel ! Art such a hound, Dietrich, as to need a bribe to pray in thine own interest ? Do that thou hast promised, for the penance, and in the interest of the monks, and then bethink thee, like an honest artisan, of the town of which thou art a citizen. I never rise from my knees without counting a few beads on the score of Duerckheim, and others for favor on the family of Frey.”

"I cry you mercy, honorable Heinrich and excellent brother Pilgrim; the wish is reasonable, and it shall be performed."

The smith then counted off his rosary, making place for the Burgomaster as soon as he could conveniently get through with the duty. In the mean time, Arnolph had prayed devoutly, and with sincere mental abasement, before each station.

The pilgrims then arranged themselves in two lines, a form of approaching the convent of Einsiedlen that is still observed by thousands annually; the men placing themselves on the right of the path in single files, and the females on its left, in a similar order. Arnolph walked ahead, and the whole proceeded. Then began the repetition of the short prayers aloud.

Whoever has wandered much through this remarkable and wild country, must have frequently met with parties of pilgrims, marching in the manner described, and uttering their aspirations in the pure air, as they ascend to, or descend from, the altar of "our Lady of the Snow," on the Rhigi, or wend their way among rocky and giddy paths, seeking or returning from some other shrine. We know of no display of human worship that is more touching or impressive than this. The temple is the most magnificent on earth, the air is as limpid as mountain torrents and a high region can bestow, while sound is conveyed to the ear, in its clearest and most distinct tones, aided perhaps by the echoes of dells that are nearly unfathomable, or of impending masses that appear to prop the skies. Long before the party is seen, the ear announces its approach by the music of the prayers; for music it is in such a place, the notes alternating regularly between the deep bass of the male to the silvery softness of the female voice.

Such was now the effect produced by the advance of our party from the Palatinate. Father Arnolph gave the lead, and the powerful lungs of Heinrich and the smith, though much restrained, uttered the words in tones impressively deep and audible. The response of the women was tremulous, soft, and soothing. In this manner did they proceed for a mile, when they entered the street of the hamlet.

An express had announced to the community of Einsiedlen the approach of the German penitents. By a sin-

gular perversion of the humble doctrines of the founder of the religion, far more importance was attached to the expiations and offerings of princes, and of nobles of high degree, than to those which proceeded from sources that were believed to be meaner. All the dwellers of the hamlet, therefore, and most of the others that frequented the shrine, were abroad to witness this expected procession. The name of Emich was whispered from ear to ear, and many curious eyes sought the form of the powerful baron, under the guise common to the whole party. By general consent, after much speculation, the popular opinion settled on the person of the smith, as on the illustrious penitent ; a distinction which Dietrich owed to the strength of his lungs, to some advantage in stature, and particularly to the zeal which, as a hireling, he thought it just to throw into his air and manner.

Among the other traditions that serve to give a popular celebrity to the shrine of our Lady of the Hermits, is one which affirms that, on an occasion it is unnecessary to relate, the Son of God, in the form of man, visited this favored shrine. He is said to have assuaged his thirst at the fountain which flows, with Swiss purity and profusion, before the door of the building ; and as the clear element has been made to run through different metal tubes, it is a custom of the Pilgrims, as they arrive, to drink a hasty swallow at each, in order to obtain the virtue of a touch so revered. There was also a plate of silver, that had marks which were said to have been left by the fingers of Jesus, and to these it was the practice to apply the hand. The former usage is still universal ; though modern cupidity has robbed the temple of the latter evidence of the reputed visit, in consequence of the value of the metal which bore its memorial.

Arnolph halted at the fountain, and, slowly making its circuit, drank at each spout. He was followed by all of his companions. But he passed the silver plate, and entered the building, praying aloud until his foot was on the threshold. Without stopping, he advanced and knelt on the cold stones before the shrine, fastening his eye the while on the carved image of Mary. The others imitated his movements, and, in a few minutes, all were kneeling before the far-famed chapel of the Divine Consecration.

The ancient church of Einsiedlen (for the building has

since been replaced by another still larger and more magnificent) had been raised around the spot where the cell of Saint Meinard originally stood. The chapel reputed to have been consecrated by angels, was in this revered cell, and the whole stood in the centre of the more modern edifice. It was small, in comparison with the pile which held it, but of sufficient size to admit of an officiating priest, and to contain many rich offerings of the pious. The whole was encased in marble, blackened by time and the exhalations of lamps; while the front, and part of the sides, permitted a view of the interior, through openings that were protected by gratings curiously and elaborately wrought.

In the farther and dark extremity of this sacred chapel, were the images of the Mother and Child. Their dresses, as is usual at all much-worshipped shrines, were loaded with precious stones and plates of gold. The face of each had a dark and bronzed color, resembling the complexion of the far east, but which probably is a usage connected with the association of an origin and destiny that are superhuman. The whole was illuminated by strong lights, in lamps of silver gilt, and the effect, to a mind indisposed to doubt, was impressive, and of a singularly mysterious influence. Such was the shrine of our Lady of the Hermits at the time of our tale, and such it continues to be to this day, with some immaterial additions and changes, that are more the results of time than of opinion.

We have visited this resort of Catholic devotion in that elevated region of hill and frost; have strolled, near the close of day, among its numerous and decorated chapels; have seen the bare-kneed peasant of the Black Forest, the swarthy Hungarian, the glittering-eyed Piedmontese, and the fair-haired German, the Tyrolese, and the Swiss, arrive, in groups, wearied and foot-sore; have watched them drinking with holy satisfaction at the several spouts, and, having followed them to the front of the altar, have wondered at the statue-like immovability with which they have remained kneeling, without changing their gaze from that of the unearthly-looking image that seemed to engross their souls. Curiosity led us to the spot alone, and at no moment of a pilgrimage in foreign lands, that has now extended to years, do we remember to have felt so completely severed from all to which we were most accustomed, as at that hour. The groups arrived in

scores, and, without pausing to exchange a greeting, without thought of lodging or rest, each hurried to the shrine, where he seemed embodied with the stone of the pavement, as, with riveted eye and abased mien, he murmured the first prayers of expiation before the image of Mary.— But to return to the narrative.

For the first hour after the arrival of the expected pilgrims of Duerckheim, not a sign of recognition, or of grace, was manifested in the convent. The officials came and went, as if none but of common character made their expiations ; and the fixed eye and swarthy face of the image seemed to return each steady gaze, with supernatural tranquillity. At length Arnolph arose, and, as if his movements were watched, a bell rang in a distant aisle. A lateral door, which communicated with the conventual buildings, opened, and the whole brotherhood issued through it into the body of the church. Arnolph immediately kneeled again, and, by a sign, commanded his companions to maintain their places. Though grievously wearied with their positions, the men complied, but neither of the females had yet stirred.

The Benedictines of Einsiedlen entered the church in the order that has been already described in the processions of Limburg. The junior monks came first, and the dignitaries last. In that age, their Abbot was commonly of a noble and ancient, and sometimes of a princely house ; for, in maintaining its influence, the Church has rarely been known to overlook the agency of those opinions and prejudices that vulgarly exist among men. In every case, however, the prelate who presided over this favored community possessed, in virtue of his office, the latter temporal distinction ; being created a mitred Abbot and a Prince of the Empire, on the day of his consecration.

During the slow advance of the long line of monks, that now drew near the shrine, there was a chant in the loft, and the deep organ accompanied the words, on a low key. Even Albrecht and the Abbé were much impressed, while Emich fairly trembled, like one that had unwittingly committed himself into the hands of his enemies.

The head of the train swept round the little chapel, and passed with measured steps before the pilgrims. The Prior and the females only prayed the more devoutly, but neither the Count nor the Burgomaster could prevent their truant eyes from watching the movement. Dietrich, little schooled

in his duties, fairly arose, and stood repeating reverences to the whole fraternity, as it passed. When the close drew near, Emich endeavored to catch a glance of the Abbot's eyes, hoping to exchange one of those secret signs of courtesy, with which the initiated, in every class of life, know how to express their sympathies. To his confusion, and slightly to his uneasiness, he saw the well-known countenance of Bonifacius, at the side of the dignitary who presided over the brotherhood of Einsiedlen. The glances of these ancient and seemingly irreconcilable rivals, were such as might have been anticipated. That of Bonifacius was replete with religious pride, and a resentment that was at least momentarily gratified; though it still retained glimmerings of conscious defeat; while that of Emich was fierce, mortified, and alarmed, all in a moment.

But the train swept on, and it was not long ere the music announced the presence of the procession in the choir. Then Arnolph again arose, and, followed by all the pilgrims, he drew near to listen to the vespers. After the prayers, the usual hymn was sung.

"Himmel! Master brother Pilgrim," whispered the smith to the Burgomaster, "that should be a voice known to all of Duerckheim!"

"Umph!"—ejaculated Heinrich, who sought the eye of Emich. "These Benedictines sing much in the same strain, Herr Emich, whether it be in Limburg, or here in the church of our Lady of the Hermits."

"By my fathers! Master Frey, but thou sayest true! To treat thee as a confidant, I little like this intimate correspondence between the Abbots, and, least of all, to see the reverend Bonifacius enthroned here, in this distant land, much as he was wont to be in our valley. I fear me, Burgomaster, that we have entered lightly on this penance!"

"If you can say this, well-born Emich, what should be the reply of one that hath wife and child, in addition to his own person, in the risk? It would have been better to covet less of Heaven, the least portion of which must naturally be better than the best of that to which we are accustomed on earth, and to be satisfied with the advantages we have. Do you note, noble Count, the friendly manner in which Bonifacius regards us from time to time?"

"His favors do not escape me, Heinrich;—but peace! we shall learn more, after the vespers are ended."

Then came the soothing power of that remarkable voice. The singer had been presented to the convent of Einsiedlen, by Bonifacius, to whom he was now useless, as a boon that was certain to give him great personal favor : and so it had proved ; for in those communities, that passed their lives in the exercise of the offices of the Church, the different shades of excellence in the execution, or the greater external riches and decorations of their several shrines, often usurped the place of a nobler strife in zeal and self-denial. The ceremony now ended, and a brother, approaching, whispered Father Arnolph. The latter proceeded to the sacristy, attended by the pilgrims, for it was forbidden, even to the trembling Meta, to seek refreshment or rest, until another important duty had been performed.

The sacristy was empty, and they awaited still in silence, while the music of the organ announced the retiring procession of the monks. After some delay, a door opened, and the Abbot of Einsiedlen, accompanied by Bonifacius, appeared. They were alone, with the exception of the treasurer of the Abbey ; and as the place was closed, the interview that now took place, was no longer subject to the vulgar gaze.

"Thou art Emich, Count of Hartenburg-Leiningen," said the prelate, distinguishing the noble spite of his mean attire, by a single glance of an eye accustomed to scan its equals ;—"a penitent at our shrine, for wrongs done the Church, and for dishonor to God?"

"I am Emich of Leiningen, holy Abbot!"

"Dost thou disclaim the obligation to be here?"

"And a penitent ;—" the words "for being here" being bitterly added, in a mental reservation.

The Abbot regarded him sternly, for he disliked the reluctance of his tongue. Taking Bonifacius apart, they consulted together for a few minutes ; then returning to the group of pilgrims, he resumed—

"Thou art now in a land that listeneth to no heresies, Herr von Hartenburg ; and it would be well to remember thy vow, and thy object. Hast thou aught to say?"

Emich slowly undid his scrip, and sought his offerings among its scanty contents.

"This crucifix was obtained by a noble of my house, when a crusader. It is of jasper, as thou seest, reverend Abbot, and it is not otherwise wanting in valuable additions."

The Abbot bowed, in the manner of one indifferent to the richness of the boon, signing to the treasurer to accept the gift. There was then a brief pause.

"This censer was the gift of a noble far less possessed than thee!" said he who kept the treasures of the Abbey, with an emphasis that could not easily be mistaken.

"Thy zeal outstrippeth the limbs of a weary man, Brother.—Here is a diamond, that hath been heirloom of my house, a century. 'Twas an emperor's gift!"

"It is well bestowed on our Lady of the Hermits though she can boast of far richer offerings from names less known than thine."

Emich now hesitated, but only for an instant, and then laid down another gift.

"This vessel is suited to thy offices," he said, "being formed for the altar's services."

"Lay the cup aside;" sternly and severely interrupted Bonifacius: "it cometh of Limburg!"

Emich colored, more in anger than in shame, however, for in that age plunder was one of the speediest and most used means of acquiring wealth. He eyed the merciless Abbot, fiercely, without speaking.

"I have no more," he said; "the wars—the charges of my house—and gold given the routed brotherhood, have left me poor!"

The treasurer turned to Heinrich, with an eloquent expression of countenance.

"Thou wilt remember, Master Treasurer, that there is no longer any question of a powerful baron," said the Burgomaster, "but that the little I have to give, cometh of a poor and saddled town. First we offer our wishes and our prayers,—secondly, we present, in all humility, and with the wish they may prove acceptable, these spoons, which may be of use in some of thy many ceremonies,—thirdly, this candlestick, which though small is warranted to be of pure gold, by jewellers of Frankfort:—and lastly, this cord, with which seven of our chief men have grievously and loyally scourged themselves, in reparation of the wrong done thy brethren."

All these offerings were graciously received, and the monk turned to the others. It is unnecessary to repeat the different donations that were made by the inferiors, who came from the castle and the town. That of Gottlob was, or pretended to be, the offending horn, which had so

irreverently been sounded near the altar of Limburg, and a piece of gold. The latter was the identical coin he had obtained from Bonifacius, in the interview which led to his arrest; and the other was a cracked instrument, that the roguish cow-herd had often essayed among his native hills, without the least success. In after-life, when the spirit of religious party grew bolder, he often boasted of the manner in which he had tricked the Benedictines by bestowing an instrument so useless.

Ulrike made her offering, with sincere and meek penitence. It consisted of a garment for the image of the Virgin, which had been chiefly wrought by her own fair hands, and on which the united tributes of her townswomen had been expended, in the way of ornaments, and in stones of inferior price. The gift was graciously received; for the community had been well instructed in the different characters of the various penitents.

"Hast thou aught in honor of Maria?" demanded the treasurer of Lottchen.

The widowed and childless woman endeavored to speak, but her power failed her. She laid upon the table, however, a neatly bound and illuminated missal; a cap that seemed to have no particular value, except its tassel of gold and green, and a hunting horn; all of which, with many others of the articles named, had made part of the load borne on the furniture of the ass.

"These are unusual gifts at our shrine!" muttered the monk.

"Reverend Benedictine," interrupted Ulrike, nearly breathless in the generous desire to avert pain from her friend, "they are extorted from her who gives, like drops of blood from the heart. This is Lottchen Hintermayer, of whom thou hast doubtless heard?"

The name of Lottchen Hintermayer had never reached the treasurer's ear; but the sweet and persuasive manner of Ulrike prevailed. The monk bowed, and he seemed satisfied. The next that advanced was Meta. The Benedictines all appeared struck by the pallid color of her cheek, and the vacant, hopeless, expression of an eye that had lately been so joyous.

"The journey hath been hard upon our daughter!" said the princely Abbot, with gentleness and concern.

"She is young, reverend Father," answered Ulrike; "but God will temper the wind to the shorn lamb."

The Abbot looked surprised, for the tones of the mother met his ear with an appeal as touching as that of the worn countenance of the girl.

"Is she thy child, good pilgrim?"

"Father, she is—Heaven make me grateful, for its blessed gift!"

Another gaze from the wondering priest, and he gave place to the treasurer, who advanced to receive the offering. The frame of Meta trembled violently, and she placed a hand to her bosom. Drawing forth a paper, she laid it simply before the monk, who gazed at it in wonder.

"What is this?" he asked. "It is the image of a youth, rudely sketched!"

"It meaneth, Father," half whispered Ulrike, "that the heart which loved him, now belongs to God!"

The Abbot bowed, hastily signing to the inferior to accept the offering; and he walked aside to conceal a tear that started to his eye. Meta at that moment fell upon her mother's breast, and was borne silently from the sacristy.

The men followed, and, with a single exception, the two Abbots and the treasurer were now left alone.

"Hast thou an offering, good woman?" demanded the latter of the female who remained.

"Have I an offering, Father! Dost think I would come thus far with an empty hand? I am Ilse, Frau Frey's nurse, that Duerckheim hath sent on this pilgrimage, as an offering in herself; and such it truly is for frail bones, and threescore and past. We are but poor town's-people of the Palatinate, but then we know what is available at need! There are many reasons why I should come, as thou shalt hear. Firstly, I was in Limburg church when the deed was——"

"How! did one of thy years go forth on such an expedition?"

"Aye, and on many other expeditions. Firstly, I was with the old Burgomaster, Frau Ulrike's father, when there was succor sent to Mannheim; secondly, I beheld, from our hills, the onset between the Elector's men, and the followers of——"

"Dost thou serve the mother of yonder weeping girl?" demanded the Abbot, cutting short the history of Ilse's campaigns.

"And the weeping girl herself, reverend, and holy and

princely Abbot, and, if thou wilt, the Burgomaster too, for, at times, in sooth, I serve the whole family."

"Canst thou repeat the history of her sorrow?"

"Naught easier, my lord and Abbot. Firstly, is she youthful, and that is an age when we grieve or are gladdened with little reason; then she is an only child, which is apt to weaken the spirit by indulgence; next, she is fair, which often tempts the heart into various vanities, and, doubtless, into sorrow, among the others; then is she foot-sore, a bitter grief of itself; and, finally, she hath much repentance for this nefarious sin, of which we are not yet purged, and which, unless pardoned, may descend to her, among other bequests from her father."

"It is well. Deposit thy gift, and kneel that I may bless thee."

Ilse did as ordered, after which she withdrew, making many reverences in the act.

As the door closed on the crone, Bonifacius and his brother Abbot quitted the place in company, leaving the monk charged with that duty, to care for the wealth that had been so liberally added to the treasury of Einsiedlen.

CHAPTER XXVI.

—"Israel, are these men
The mighty hearts you spoke of?"—BYRON.

THERE was little resemblance in the characters of the two prelates, beyond that which was the certain consequence of their common employment. If Bonifacius was the most learned, of the strongest intellectual gifts, and, in other particulars relating to the mind, of the higher endowments, the princely Abbot of Einsiedlen had more of those gentle and winning qualities which best adorn the Christian life. Perhaps neither was profoundly and meekly pious, for this was not easy to men surrounded by so many inducements to flatter their innate weaknesses: but both habitually respected the outward observances of their Church; and both, in degrees proportioned to the boldness and sagacity of their respective intellects, yielded faith to the virtue of its offices.

On quitting the sacristy, they proceeded through the

cloisters, to the abode of the chief of the community. Here, closeted together, there was a consultation concerning their further proceedings.

"Thou wert of near neighborhood," said he of our Lady of the Hermits, "to this hardy baron, Brothêr Bonifacius?"

"As thou mayest imagine by the late events. There lay but a few arrow's flights between his castle and our unhappy walls."

"Had ye good understanding of old, or cometh the present difficulty from long-standing grievances?"

"Thou art happy, pious Rudiger, to be locked, as you are, among your frosts and mountains, beyond the reach of noble's arm, and beyond the desires of noble's ambition. Limburg and the craving Counts have scarce known peace since our Abbey's foundation. Your unquiet baron fills some such agency, in respect to our religious communities, as that which the unquiet spirit of the Father of Sin occupies in the moral world."

"And yet, I doubt that the severest blow we are to receive will come from one of ourselves! If all that rumor and missives from the Bishops reveal, be true, this schism of Luther promises us a lasting injury!"

Bonifacius, whose mind penetrated the future much farther than most of his brethren possessed the means of doing, heard this remark gloomily; and he sat brooding over the pictures which a keen imagination presented, while his companion watched the play of his massive features, with intuitive interest.

"Thou art right, princely Abbot," the former at length replied. "To us, both the future and the past are filled with lessons of deep instruction, could we but turn them to present advantage. All that we know of earth shows that each physical thing returns to its elements, when the object of its creation has been accomplished. The tree helps to pile the earth which once nourished its roots; the rock crumbles to the sand of which it was formed; and even man turns to that dust which was animated that he might live. Can we then expect that our Abbeys, or that even the Church itself, in its present temporal organization, will stand forever?"

"Thou hast done well to qualify thy words by saying temporal, good Bonifacius, for if the body decays, the soul remains; and the essence of our communion is in its spiritual character."

“Hearken, right reverend and noble Rudiger. Go ask of Luther the niceties of his creed on this point, and he will tell thee, that he is a believer in the transmigration of souls—that he keepeth this spiritual character, but in a new dress ; and that, while he consigns the ancient body to the tomb, he only lightens the imperishable part of a burden that has grown too heavy to be borne.”

“But this is rank rebellion to authority, and flat refusal of doctrine !”

“Of the former, there can be no question ; and, as to our German regions, most seem prepared to incur its risks. In respect to doctrine, learned Rudiger, you now broach a thesis which resembles the bells in your convent towers—on which there may be rung endless changes, from the simple chime to a triple-bob-major.”

“Nay, reverend Bonifacius, thou treatest a grave subject with irreverent levity. If we are to tolerate these innovations, there is an end of discipline ; and I marvel that a dignified priest should so esteem them !”

“Thou dost me injustice, Brother ; for what I urge is said in befitting seriousness. The ingenuity of man is so subtle, and his doubts, once engaged, so restless, that when the barrier of discipline is raised, I know no conclusion for which a clever head may not find a reason. Has it never struck thee, reverend Rudiger, that a great error hath been made from the commencement, in founding all our ordinances to regulate society, whether they be of religious or of mere temporal concerns ?”

“Thou asketh this of one who hath been accustomed to think of his superiors with respect.”

“I touch not on our superiors, nor on their personal qualities. What I would say is, that our theories are too often faulty, inasmuch as they are made to suit former practices ; whereas, in a well-ordered world, methinks the theory should come first, and the usage follow as a consequence of suitable conclusions.”

“This might have done for him who possessed Eden, but those who came after were compelled to receive things as they were, and to turn them to profit as they might.”

“Brother and princely Abbot, thou hast grappled with the dilemma ! Could we be placed in the occupancy of this goodly heritage, untrammelled by previously endeared interests, seeing the truth, naught would be easier than to make practice conform to theory ; but, being that we are,

priest and noble, saint and sinner, philosopher and worldling, why, look you, the theory is driven to conform to the necessities of practice ; and hence doctrine, at the best, is but a convertible authority. As a Benedictine, and a lover of Rome, I would that Luther had been satisfied with mere changes in habits, for these may be accommodated to climates and prejudices ; but when the flood-gates of discussion are raised, no man can say to what extent, or in what direction, the torrent will flow."

"Thou hast little faith, seemingly, in the quality of reason?"

Bonifacius regarded his companion a moment with an ill-concealed sneer.

"Surely, holy Rudiger," he gravely replied, "thou hast not so long governed thy fellows to put this question to me! Hadst thou said passion, we might right quickly come to an understanding. The corollaries of our animal nature follow reasonably enough from the proposition ; but when we quit the visible landmarks of the species, to launch upon the ocean of speculation, we commit ourselves, like the mariner who trusts his magnet, to an unknown cause. He that is a-hungered will eat, and he that is pained will roar ; he that hath need of gold will rob, in some shape or other ; and he that loveth his ease may prefer quiet to trouble ; all this may be calculated, with other inferences that follow ; but if thou wilt tell me what course the Lammergeyer will take when he hath soared beyond the Alps, I will tell thee the direction in which the mind of man will steer, when fairly afloat on the sea of speculation and argument."

"The greater the necessity that it should be held in the wholesome limits of discipline and doctrine."

"Were doctrine like our convent walls, all would be well ; but being what it is, men become what they are."

"How! Dost thou account faith for naught? I have heard there were brothers of deep piety in Limburg. Father Johan, who perished in defence of thy altars, may go near to be canonized—to say nothing of the excellent Prior, who is here among us on this pilgrimage."

"I count faith for much, excellent Brother ; and happy is he who can satisfy uneasy scruples by so pleasant an expedient. Brother Johan may be canonized, if our Father of Rome shall see fit, hereafter, and the fallen Limburg will have reason to exult in its member. Still I do not see

that the unhappy Johan proveth aught against the nature of doctrine, for, had he been possessed of less pertinacity in certain of his opinions, he would have escaped the fate which befell him."

"Is martyrdom a lot to displease a Christian? Bethink thee of the Fathers, and of their ends!"

"Had Johan bethought him more of their fortunes, his own might have been different. Reverend Abbot, Johan hath long ceased to be a riddle to me;—though I deny not his utility with the peasant and the fervent. But him thou hast last mentioned"—here Bonifacius leaned a cheek on his hand, and spoke like one that was seriously perplexed—"him thou namedst last—the sincere, and wise, and simple Arnolph, have I never truly comprehended! That man appeareth equally contented in his cell or in his stall; honored equally in his office, and on this weary pilgrimage; whether in prosperity or in misfortune, he is ever at peace with himself and with others. Here is truly a man that no reasoning of mine hath been able to fathom. He is not ambitious, for thrice hath he refused the mitre! He is sustained by no wild visions or deceitful fantasies, like the unhappy Johan; nor yet is he indifferent to any of the more severe practices of his profession, all of which are observed quietly, and seemingly with satisfaction. He is learned, without the desire of discussion; meek, amid a firmness that would despise the stake; and forgiving to a degree that might lead us to call him easy, but for a consistency that never seemeth to yield to any influence of season, events, or hopes. Truly, this is a man that bafflETH all my knowledge!"

Bonifacius, in despite of his acquirements, his masculine intellect, and his acquaintance with men, did not perceive how much he admitted against himself, by expressing his own inability to fathom the motives of the Prior. Nor did the enigma appear to be perfectly intelligible to his companion, who listened curiously to the other's description of their brother; much as we hearken to a history of inexplicable or supernatural incidents.

"I have heard much of Arnolph," observed the latter, "though never matter so strange as this;—and yet most seem to love him!"

"Therein is his power!—though often most opposed to me, I cannot say that I myself am indifferent to the man—By our patron saint! I sometimes fain believe I love

him! He was among the last to desert our altars, when pressed by this rapacious noble, and his credulous and silly burghers; and yet was he foremost to forgive the injury when committed. But for him, and his high influence with the Bishops, there might have been blows for blows spite of this schism that hath turned so many in Germany from our support."

"And since thou speakest of the schism, in what manner dost thou account for an innovation so hardy in a region that is usually esteemed reasonable! There must have been relaxation of authority; for there is no expedient so certain to prevent heresies, or errors of doctrine, as a Church well established, and which is maintained by fitting authority."

Bonifacius smiled, for even in that early age, his penetrating mind saw the fallacy to which the other was a dupe.

"This is well when there is right; but when there is error, Brother, your established authority does but uphold it. The provisions that are made in thy comfortable abode to keep the cold air out, may be the means of keeping foul air within."

"In this manner of reasoning, truth can have no existence!—Thou darest doctrine, and thou wilt naught of discipline!"

"Nay, holy Rudiger, in the latter thou greatly misconceivest me. Of discipline I would have all that is possible; I merely deny that it is any pledge of truth. We are apt to say that a well-ordained and established Church is the buttress of truth, when experience plainly sheweth that this discipline doeth more harm to truth than it can ever serve it, and that simply because there can be but one truth, while there are many modes of discipline; many establishments therefore uphold many errors, or truth hath no identity with itself."

"Thou surprisest me!—Whatever may come of this heresy, as yet, I know of but one assault on our supremacy; and that cometh of error, as we come of right."

"This is well for Christendom, but what sayeth it for your Moslem—your fire-worshipper—your Hindoo—your Pagan, and all the rest; any one of whom is just as ready to keep out error by discipline, as we of Rome? Until now, certainly among Christians this evil hath not often happened, though even we are not without our differences:

but looking to this advance of the printing art, and of the variety of opinions that are its fruits, I foresee that we are to have many opposing expedients, all of which will be equally well pondered and concocted to keep in truth, and to exclude error. This pretension of high authority, and of close exactions to maintain purity of doctrine, and what we deem truth, is well, as the jurists say, *quoad hoc*; but touching the general question, I do not see its virtue. Now that men enlist with passion in these spiritual discussions, we may look to see various modifications of the Church, all of which will be more or less buttressed by human expedients, as so many preservatives of truth; but when the time shall come that countries and communities are divided among themselves on these subtleties, look you, excellent Rudiger, we may expect to shut in as much error by our laws and establishments, as we shall shut out. I fear heaven is a goal that must be reached by a general mediation, leaving each to give faith to the minor points of doctrine, according to his habits and abilities."

"This savors more of the houseless Abbot than of him who lately had an obedient and flourishing brotherhood!" Rudiger somewhat piquantly rejoined.

Bonifacius was unmoved by the evident allusion, regarding his companion coolly, and like a man who too well knew his own superiority easily to take offence. His reply, however, would probably have been a retort, notwithstanding this seeming moderation, had not a door opened, and Arnolph quietly entered the room.

The reception of the Prior, by his two mitred brethren, proved the deep respect which had so universally been won by his self-denying qualities. In the great struggle of the conflicting egotism which composes, in a great degree, the principle of most of the actions of this uneasy world, no one is so likely to command universal esteem, as he who appears willing to bear the burden of life, with as little as possible of its visible benefits, by withdrawing himself from the arena of its contentions. In the great mass, an occasional retreat from the struggle, on the part of those who have few means of success, creates but little feeling of any sort, perhaps; but when he that hath undeniable pretensions exhibits this forbearance, he may be certain of obtaining full credit for all that he possesses, and more, even to the admission of qualifications that would be vehemently denied had he taken a different atti-

tude in respect to his rivals. Such was, in some measure, the position of Father Arnolph; and Bonifacius himself never struggled to resist his natural impulses towards the pious monk, having a secret persuasion that none of his virtues, however publicly proclaimed, were likely to militate against his own interests.

"Thou art much wearied, holy Prior," said the Abbot of Einsiedlen, offering a seat to his visitor, with assiduous and flattering attention.

"I count it not, princely Rudiger; having lightened the way with much good discourse, and many prayers; my pilgrims are faint, but, happily arrived, they are now fairly committed to the convent's hospitality."

"Thou hast with thee, reverend Arnolph, a noble of high esteem in thy German country?"

"Of ancient blood, and of great worldly credit," returned the Prior, with reserve.

"What thinkest thou, Brother Bonifacius?—It may not be prudent to make any very public manifestations of a difference of treatment, between those who seek our shrine; but do not hospitality and such courtesy as marketh our own breeding, demand some private greetings. Is my opinion suitable, worthy Arnolph?"

"God is no respecter of persons, Abbot of Einsiedlen."

"Can any know this better than ourselves? But we pretend not to perfection, nor can our judgments be set up as decisive of men's merits, farther than belongs to our office. Ours is an hospitable order, and we are privileged to earn esteem, and therefore doth it appear to me not only becoming but politic to show a noble of this repute, and at a moment when heresy runs mad, that we do not overlook the nature of his sacrifices. Thou art silent, Brother Abbot!"

The Abbot of Limburg listened with secret satisfaction, for he had views of his own that the proposal favored. He was therefore about to give a ready assent, when Arnolph interrupted him.

"I have nobles among my followers, right reverend Abbot," said the latter, earnestly; "and I have those that deserve to be more than noble, if deep Christian humility can claim to be so esteemed. I did not come to speak of Emich of Hartenburg, but of spirits sorely bruised, and to beg of thee, in their behalf, a boon of churchly offices."

"Name it, Father, and make certain of its fair reception.

But it is now late, and no rites of the morrow need defeat our intentions of honest hospitality."

"They in whose behalf I would speak," said Arnolph, with apparent mortification, "are already without; if admitted, they may best explain their own desires."

The Abbot signified a ready assent to receive these visitors, and the Prior hastened to admit them, anticipating a wholesome effect on the minds of his superiors from the interview. When he reappeared, he was followed by Ulrike, Lottchen, and Meta, who came after him in the order named. Both the Abbots seemed surprised, for it exceeded their confidence in themselves to admit visitors of that sex, at an hour so equivocal, in the more retired parts of the buildings, and they counted little on the boldness of innocence.

"This exceedeth usage!" exclaimed the superior of Einsiedlen. "It is true, we have our privileges, pious Arnolph, but they are resorted to with great discretion."

"Fear not, holy Abbot," Arnolph calmly answered, "this visit may at least claim to be as harmless as that of those thou hast just named. Speak, virtuous Ulrike, that thy wishes may be known."

Ulrike crossed herself, first casting a tearful eye on the pallid and depressed countenances of her daughter and of her friend.

"We are come to your favored shrine, princely and pious Abbot," she slowly commenced, like one who feared the effects of her own words, "penitents, pilgrims, and acknowledging our sins, in order to expiate a great wrong, and to implore Heaven's pardon. The accomplishment of our wishes hath been promised by the Church, and by one greater than the Church, should we bring with us contrite hearts. In this behalf, then, we have now little to offer, since our pious guide, the beloved and instructed Arnolph, hath taught us to omit no observance, nor hath he, in any particular, left us ignorant of the state of mind that best befitteth our present undertaking. But, right reverend Abbot——"

"Proceed, daughter; thou wilt find all here ready to listen," said Rudiger, kindly, observing that her words became choked, and that she continued to cast uneasy looks at Lottchen and Meta. The voice of the speaker sank, but her tones were still more earnest, as she continued.

"Holy Benedictine, aided by Heaven's kindness, I will in all that toucheth our pilgrimage and its duties, we confide entirely to the pious counsel of the learned and godly Arnolph, and he will tell you that naught material hath by us been neglected. We have prayed, and confessed, and fasted, and done the needed expiations, in a meek mood, and with contrite hearts. We come then to ask a service of this favored community, which, we trust, may not be refused to the Christian."

The Abbot looked surprised, but he awaited her own time to continue.

"It hath pleased Heaven to call away one dear to us, at a short summons," proceeded Ulrike, not without casting another fearful glance at her companions; "and we would ask the powerful prayers of the community of Our Lady of the Hermits, in behalf of his soul."

"Of what age was the deceased?"

"God summoned him, reverend Abbot, in early youth."

"By what means did he come to his end?"

"By a sudden display of Heaven's power."

"Died he at peace with God and the Church?"

"Father, his end was sudden and calamitous. None can know the temper of the mind at that awful moment."

"But did he live in the practices of our faith? Thou comest of a region in which there is much heresy, and this is an hour in which the shepherd cannot desert the fold."

Ulrike paused, for the breathing of her friend was thick and audible.

"Princely Abbot, he was a Christian. I held him myself at the font. This humble penitent and pilgrim gave him birth, and to this holy Prior hath he often confessed."

The Abbot greatly disliked the manner of the answers. His brow drew over the eyes, and he turned jealous glances from Arnolph to the females.

"Canst thou vouch for thy penitent?" he demanded abruptly of the Prior.

"His soul hath need of masses."

"Was he tainted with the heresy of the times?"

Arnolph paused. His mind underwent a severe struggle, for, while he distrusted the opinions of Berchthold, he knew nothing that a scrupulous and conscientious judge could fairly construe into unequivocal evidence of his dereliction from the Church.

"Thou dost not answer, Prior!"

"God hath not gifted me with knowledge to judge the secret heart."

"Ha! this grows plainer. Reverend Bonifacius, canst thou say aught of this?"

The dethroned Abbot of Limburg had, at first, listened to the dialogue with indifference. There had even been an ironical smile on his lips while Ulrike was speaking, but when Arnolph was questioned, it disappeared in an active and a curious desire to know in what manner a man so conscientious would extricate himself from the dilemma. Thus directly questioned, however, he found himself obliged to become a party in the discourse.

"I well know, princely and pious Rudiger, that heresy is rife in our misguided Palatinate," he answered; "else would not the Abbot of Limburg be a houseless guest in Einsiedlen."

"Thou hearest, daughter! The youth is suspected of having died an enemy of the Church."

"The greater the errors, if this be true, the greater the need that prayers be offered for his soul."

"This would be truly aiding Lucifer in his designs to overturn our tabernacles, and a weakness not to be indulged. I am grieved to be compelled to show this discipline to one of thy seeming zeal, but our altars cannot be defiled by sacrifices in behalf of those who despise them. Was the youth connected with the fall of Limburg?"

"Father, he died in the crush of its roofs," said Ulrike, in nearly inaudible syllables; "and we deem the manner of his end another reason why extraordinary masses should be said in his behalf."

"Thou askest an impossibility. Were we to yield to our pity, in these cases of desperate heresies, it would discourage the faithful, and embolden those who are already too independent."

"Father!" said a tremulous and low, but eager voice.

"What wouldest thou, daughter?" asked the Abbot, turning to Lottchen.

"Listen to a mother's prayer. The boy was born and educated in the bosom of the Church. For reasons at which I do not repine, Heaven early showed its displeasure on his father and on me. We were rich, and we became poor; we were esteemed of men, and we learned how much better is the support of God. We submitted; and when we saw those who had once looked up to us in

respect, looking down upon us in scorn, we kissed the child, were grateful, and did not repine. Even this trial was not sufficient—the father was taken from his pains and mortifications, and my son put on the livery of a baron. I will not say—I cannot say—my strength would have been equal to all this of itself. An angel, in the form of this constant and excellent woman, was sent to sustain me. Until the late wrong to Limburg, we had our hopes and our hours of happiness—but that crime defeated all. My boy hath perished by a just anger, and I remain to implore Heaven in his behalf. Wilt thou refuse the Church's succor to a childless mother, who, this favor obtained, will be ready to bless God and die?"

"Thou troublest me, daughter; but I beg thee to remember I am but the guardian of a high and sacred trust."

"Father!" said a second and still more thrilling appeal.

"Thou too, child! What wouldest thou of one but too ready to yield, were it not for duty?"

Meta had kneeled, and throwing back the hood of her pilgrim's mantle, the change left her bloodless face exposed to the Abbot's view. The girl seemed severely struggling with herself; then, finding encouragement in her mother's eye, she was able to continue.

"I know, most holy and very reverend Abbot," she commenced, with an evidently regulated phraseology, like one who had been instructed how to make the appeal, "that the Church hath need of much discipline; without which there would be neither duration nor order in its existence. This hath my mother taught me; and we both admit it, and prize the truth. For this reason have we submitted ourselves to all its ordinances, never failing to confess and worship, or to observe fasts and saints' days. Even the mitred Bonifacius, there, will not deny this, as respects either of us——"

Meta delayed, as if inviting the Abbot to gainsay her words if he could; but Bonifacius was silent.

"As for him that hath died," resumed Meta, whose voice sounded like plaintive music, "this is the truth. He was born a Christian, and he never said aught in my presence against the Church. Thou canst not think, father, that he who sought my esteem, would strive to gain it by means that no Christian girl could respect? That he was often at the Abbey confessionals I know; and that he was in favor with this holy Prior, thou hast but to ask, to learn

In going against Limburg, he did but obey his lord, as others have often done before ; and surely all that fall in battle are not to be hopelessly condemned. If there is heresy in Germany, is it not enough of itself to endure so great a danger in life, that the dead must be abandoned to their past acts, without succor from the Church, or thought from their friends ? Oh ! thou wilt think better, holy but cruel Rudiger, of thy hasty decision. Give us then masses for poor Berchthold ! I know not what Bonifacius may have said to thee in secret, concerning the youth, but this much would I say in his favor, in presence of the assembled earth—more pious son, more faithful follower, a braver at need, a more gentle in intercourse, a truer or kinder heart than his, does not now beat in the Palatinate ! I know not but I exceed the limits of a maiden's speech, in what I say," continued the girl ardently, a bright spot shining on each cheek amid her tears, "but the dead are mute, and if those they loved are cold to their wants, in what manner is Heaven to know their cruel need ?"

"Good daughter," interrupted the Abbot, who began to feel distressed, "we will think of this. Go thou to thy rest,—and may God bless thee !"

"Nay, I cannot sleep while the soul of Berchthold endures this jeopardy ! Perhaps the Church will demand penance in his behalf. My mother Lottchen is no longer young and strong, as formerly ; but thou seest, father, what I am ! Name what thou wilt—pilgrimages, fasts, stripes, prayers, or vigils, are alike to me. Nay, think not that I regard them ! Thou canst not bestow more happiness than to give this task for poor Berchthold's sake. Oh ! hadst thou known him, holy monk, so kind with the weak, so gentle with us maidens, and so true, thou wouldst not, nay, thou couldst not need another prayer to grant the masses !"

"Bonifacius, is there no means of justifying the concession ?"

"I would speak to thee, Brother," answered he of Limburg, who, with a thoughtful countenance, awaited his companion a little apart from the others.

The conference of the two prelates was short, but it was decisive.

"Take away the child," said the Abbot Rudiger, to Ulrike ; "the weight of Heaven's displeasure must be borne."

The Prior sighed heavily ; but he signed for the females to obey, like one who saw the uselessness of further en-

treaties. Leading the way, he left the Abbot's abode, his companions following; nor did a murmur escape either while giving this proof of patient submission. It was only when Ulrike and Lottchen had reached the open air that they found the helpless girl they supported was without sensibility. As fits of fainting had been common of late, her mother felt no great alarm, nor was it long before all the female pilgrims sought the pillows they so much needed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Fy, uncle Beaufort! I have heard you preach,
That malice was a great and grievous sin:"—*King Henry VI.*

THE social character of a Benedictine community has been mentioned in one of the earlier chapters. That of Einsiedlen, though charged with the worship of altars especially favored, formed no exception to the general rule. If anything, the number of distinguished pilgrims that frequented its shrine, rendered it liable to more than usual demands on its hospitality; demands that were met by a suitable attention to the rules of the brotherhood. Even Loretto has its palace for the entertainment of such princes as can descend from their thrones to kneel in the "santa casa;" for policy, not to speak of a more generous motive, requires that the path should be smoothed to those devotees who are unaccustomed to encounter difficulties. In conformity with a rule of their order, then, though dwelling in the secluded and wild region already described, the fraternity of our Lady of the Hermits, had their Abbot's abode, their lodgings for the stranger, and their stores of cheer, as well as their cells and their religious rites.

It was about three hours after the interview related in the last chapter—a time that brings us near the turn of the night—that we shall return to the narrative. The scene is a banqueting-hall, or, to speak in more measured phrase, a private refectory, in which the princely Abbot was wont to entertain those in whose behalf he saw sufficient reasons to exercise more than ordinary attention and favor. There was no great show of luxury in the ordinary decorations of the place, for a useless display of

its means formed no part of the system of a community that chiefly existed by the liberality of the pious. Still the hall was as well arranged as comported with the rude habits of the age, in that secluded region—habits that consulted the substantial portion of human enjoyments far more than those elaborate and effeminate inventions, which use has since rendered nearly indispensable to later generations. The floor was of tile, not very nicely polished; the walls were wainscoted in dark oak; and the ceiling had a rude attempt to represent the supper given at the marriage of Cana, and the miracle of the wine. Notwithstanding it was midsummer, a cheerful fire blazed in a chimney of huge dimensions; the size of the apartment and the keen air of the mountains rendering such an auxiliary not only agreeable, but necessary. The board was spacious and well covered, offering a generous display of those healthful and warm liquors, which have so long given the Rhine additional estimation with every traveller of taste.

Around the table were placed the Abbot, and his unhoused peer, Bonifacius; a favorite or two of the community of Einsiedlen; with Emich, the Knight of Rhodes, the Abbé, Heinrich Frey, and the smith. The former were in their usual conventual robes; while the latter were confounded, so far as externals were concerned, in their dresses of pilgrims. Deitrich owed his present advantage altogether to the fortuitous circumstance of being found in so good company, divested of the usual distinguishing marks of his rank. If Bonifacius was at all aware of his character, indifference or policy prevented its exposure.

Had one been suddenly introduced to this midnight scene, he would scarce have recognized the weary penitent and the reproving churchman, in the jovial cheer and boon companionship of the hour. The appetite was already more than satisfied, and many a glass had been quaffed in honor of both hosts and guests, ere the precise moment to which we transfer the action of the tale.

The princely prelate occupied the seat of honor, as became his high rank, while Bonifacius was seated at one elbow, and the Count of Hartenburg at the other. The great consideration due to the first, as well as his personal character and mild manners, had served to preserve all outward appearances of amity and courteous intercourse

between his neighbors, neither of whom had as yet suffered the slightest intimation of their former knowledge of each other to escape him. This polite duplicity, which we have reason to think is of very ancient origin, and in which Albrecht of Viederbach and Monsieur Latouche assisted with rare felicity, aided in curbing the feelings of their inferiors, who, being less trained in the seemliness of deception, might otherwise have given vent to some of their bodily pains by allusions of an irritating and questionable nature.

"Thou findest our liquors palatable?" courteously observed the Abbôt, as we shall, *par excellence*, now distinguish him of Einsiedlen. "This of the silver cup, cometh from the liberality of thy late Elector, who had occasion to send votive offerings, in behalf of the illness of one of his family, to our Lady of the Hermits, and who had the grace to accompany the memorial to the convent treasury by this sign of private regard; and that thou seemest most to relish, is a neighborly boon from our Brother of Saint Gall, than whom more generous churchman does not wear a cowl. Thou knowest, son, that the matter of good wine hath long been the subject of especial care with that thriving brotherhood."

"Thou overratest my knowledge of history, princely Abbot," returned Emich, setting down the glass, however, in a manner to show that his familiarity with good liquors might safely be assumed. "We of the lower countries waste but little time on these studies, trusting chiefly to those who dwell at the universities for the truth of what we hear. If he of Saint Gall dispenseth much of this goodly liquor, certes it were well that our spiritual guardians sent us, on occasions, to make our pilgrimages in that region, which cannot be far from this, unless my geography is greatly in fault."

"Thou couldest not have better divined, hadst thou been a doctor of Wittenberg, or of Rome itself! Considering our mountain paths, and the insufficiency of the bridges and other conveniences, it may require two suns to urge a beast from our convent gate to that of our brother of Saint Gall, though, on emergencies, we have succeeded, by means of faithful footmen, in getting tidings to their ears within the day and night. Saint Gall is a wealthy and well-bestowed Abbey, of very ancient existence, and of much repute as the haven of letters, during the darkest

period, learned Bonifacius, of our more modern times; though the late increase of its town, and the growing turbulence of the times, have not permitted it to escape, with impunity, from the dangers that now beset all of Rome."

This was the first allusion which had been made to the events that had so singularly brought the present company together; and, but for the address and self-command of Bonifacius, it might have brought on a discussion that would not have proved agreeable.

"Saint Gall and its merits are unknown to none who wear the frock of Saint Benedict," he said, with admirable composure. "Thou hast well said that its walls were, for many ages, the sole protectors of learning in our Europe; for without the diligence and fidelity of its Abbots and brotherhood, much that is now preserved and prized would have been irretrievably lost to posterity and to ourselves."

"I doubt not, reverend Benedictine," observed Emich, speaking courteously across the Abbot to Bonifacius, much as a well-bred guest at board addresses a convive to whom he is otherwise a stranger, "that this rare taste in liquors, of which there has just been question, is the fruit of the excellent knowledge which you extol?"

"That is a point I shall not hastily decide," returned Bonifacius, smiling. "It may be so, for we have accounts of sore discord between Saint Gall and others even of the Church, touching the uses and qualities of their wines."

"That have we, and right faithfully recorded!" rejoined the Abbot. "There was the war between the Prince Bishop of Basle and our brethren of Saint Gall, that led to sore contentions and heavy losses."

"How! did the desire to partake urge our Rhenish prelate to push adventure so far as to come this distance in quest of liquor?"

"Thou art in error, son pilgrim, concerning the nature of Saint Gall's stores. We have vineyards, it is true, among these mountains, as witness those on the shores of the neighboring lake of Zurich, as well as others that might be named; but our country wines will warm the blood of peasant only. He that hath tasted better, seldom fills his cup with liquor that comes from any region this side the farther border of Swabia—your vines of the Rheingau in specialty; whereas the territories of Saint Gall lie still farther from those favored countries than we ourselves."

"You have need to explain, princely Abbot ; for that the Baslois should come in our direction, in quest of good liquor, is clear enough, whereas the war you have named would have sent him farther from his object."

"Thou hast not come hither, son, without marking the course of the Rhine, on whose banks thou hast so long journeyed. This great stream, though so turbulent and dangerous among the mountains, is of much use in procuring our supplies. By means of the lake of Constance, and the lower river, heavy burthens arrive at the very territory of our sister Abbey ; and the dispute to which there has been allusion, came of the fact that the right reverend prelate of Basle would fain have demanded toll on the purchases of the Abbey. Thou mayest remember, brother," looking toward Bonifacius, "that when both were tired of blows, the good Bishop sent to demand 'What the Virgin had done, that the churchmen above should slay her people?' and that he received for a merry answer the question of, 'What has Saint Gall done, that thou shouldest stop his wines?'"

The listeners laughed, in low simpers, like men amused with this characteristic narrative ; for such incidents were yet too recent to excite much other reflection, even among churchmen, than what was connected with the vulgar temporal interests of the incident.

"By the Magi ! holy and princely Abbot, thy tale giveth additional flavor !" said Emich, who greatly enjoyed the quarrel ; "it moreover serveth to shut out thoughts that come from aching bones and weary feet."

"Thy pilgrimage, son, will bring its rewards as well as its pains. Should it be a means of removing thee, for a time, from the heresies of Germany, and of placing thee and thine in more friendly communion with the Church, the toil will not be lost."

"As such do I esteem the duty," returned Emich, tossing off his glass, after steadily regarding the liquor a moment by the fire-light. "Saint Gall had the right of the matter ; and he who would not take up arms for this, did not deserve to wear them. How, now, Herr Frey ! Thou art silent ?"

"Not more so, I trust, nobly-born Emich, than cometh one on a pilgrimage ; and one who hath need to bethink him of his duties, lest his town should have cause to reproach him with negligence."

"God's truth, Master Burgomaster! If any here have reason to bethink them of Duerckheim, it is the city's sovereign and lord. So cheer up, and let us lighten the load we carry, always under the favor and good graces of this hospitable and well-endowed brotherhood."

"Thou art a servitor of the Cross?" demanded the Abbot of Albrecht of Viederbach, beckoning the Knight to come nearer.

"An indifferent one, princely and pious Rudiger, and, I might say, one that hath yielded to the seductions of company and good fellowship, not to speak of the force of blood; else would he have been spared this expiation."

"Nay, I name not thy pursuit with the intent to reproach," interrupted the courteous prelate. "Such liberty does not become hospitality. We make a difference within these walls between the confessional and the board."

"The distinction is just, and promises perpetuity and lasting respect to our faith, spite of all heresies. The rock on which this Brother Luther and his followers will split, holy Abbot—at least, it so seemeth to an uninstructed capacity—is the desire to refine beyond men's means of endurance. Religion, like chivalry, is good in its way; but neither the priest nor the knight can bear his armor at all times and seasons. Your schismatic hath the desire to convert the layman into a monk, whereas the beauty of creation is its order; and he that is charged with the cure of souls, is sufficient for his object, without laying this constant burthen on the shoulders of him that hath already more of temporal cares than he can bear."

"Were others more of thy mind, son, we should have less trouble, and better discipline. Our altars are not useless, and if they who frequent them, could be content to think that we are sufficient for their safety, the world would be saved much disputation and haply some shedding of blood. But with these safe and creditable opinions, Sir Knight and Pilgrim," continued the Abbot, dropping his voice to a more confidential key, "it may be permitted me to express surprise, that I see thee one of a penitence commanded for violence done a convent!"

Albrecht of Viederbach shrugged his shoulders, and glanced meaningly toward his cousin.

"What will you, right noble and reverend Prelate!—We are but the creatures of accident. There is respect due

to fellowship and hospitality, to say naught of the claims of blood and kindred. The evil turn of the Rhodian warfare, some longings to look again at our German fields, for the father-land keeps its hold of us more particularly in adversity, with the habits of an unsettled existence, served to lead me to the castle of Hartenburg; and fairly entered, it will excite no wonder that the guest was ready to lend his sword, in a short foray, to the host. These sallies, as thou well knowest, princely Rudiger, are not so rare as to be deemed miracles."

"What thou sayest is true," returned the Abbot, always speaking as it were aside to the Knight, and manifesting no great surprise at this avowal of principles, that were common enough in that age, and which have descended in a different form to our own, since we daily see men, in the gravest affairs of a nation, putting their morality at the disposal of party, rather than incur the odium of being wanting in this species of social faith. "What thou sayest is very true, and may well furnish thy plea with the Grand Master. Thou mayest on many accounts, too, find this pilgrimage wholesome."

"Doubt it not, reverend Abbot. We had little time during the siege, to pay due attention to the rites; and the general looseness of our lives, since driven from the island, has left long arrears to settle; a fact that I endeavor to remember now."

"And thy associate—he of gentle mien; hath he not also connection with the Church?"

Albrecht turned to whisper the reply.

"'Tis but one that circulates under the frock, holy Benedictine—a youth that hath been the dupe of Lord Emich; for to speak thee fair, my cousin wanteth not of the policy necessary to his condition and to the habits of a sage government."

The Abbot smiled in a way to show a good intelligence between him and his companion. After this, they talked apart earnestly for a while, beckoning Monsieur Latouche to make one of their party, after sundry glances in his direction. In the meantime, the general discourse proceeded among the other guests.

"I was sorrowed to hear, reverend Benedictine," proceeded the Count, purposely avoiding the eye of Bonifacius, by addressing himself to one of the brotherhood of Einsiedlen, "that thy community hath refused us masses, for the

soul of one that fell in that unhappy dispute which is the cause of our present pleasure, in being in so goodly company. I loved the youth, and would fain deal liberally by those that remember his present necessities."

"Hath the matter been fairly put to those having the right to decide?" demanded the monk, showing by the direction of his eye, that he meant his superior.

"They tell me it hath, and put touchingly; but without success. I trust there has been no hostile interference in this affair, which concerneth no less than a soul, and ought to be dealt by tenderly."

"I know of but one, and that is the Father of Evil himself, that hath an enmity to souls!" answered the monk, with very honest surprise—"As for us, it is our pleasure to be of use on all such occasions; and that especially when the request is preferred by friends of the deceased, that are worthy of so much higher favor."

"Dost thou call those who overturn altars," said Bonifacius, sternly, and with great firmness of voice,—“who visit the temple with the armed hand, and who defy the Church, worthy of her favors!"

"Reverend Abbot!——"

"Nay, let him give his humor vent," said Emich, proudly—"the cold air and a roofless head are apt to move the temper. I would fain have met thee, Bonifacius, in amity, as should have been the case, after our solemn treaty, and all the reparations that are made; but the desire to rule, it would seem, does not abandon thee, even in banishment!"

"Thou art deceived in imagining that I shall forget myself, or my office, rude Emich;—the question put was to the Benedictine, and not to thee."

"Then let the Benedictine answer. I ask thee, Father, is it becoming or just, that the soul of a youth of good repute, of moral life, and of reasonable earthly hopes, should be refused aid, on the mere grudge of ancient hostility, or haply that there were some passages at his death, that might have been better avoided?"

"The Church must judge for itself, noble Pilgrim, and decide on those rules which regulate its course!"

"By the sainted eleven thousand!—thou forgettest, that all usages have been respected, and that the masses are not asked as the beggar imploreth alms, but that fairly counted gold is proffered in behalf of the youth. If enough

has not been done in this way, I swear to thee, Bonifacius, since it would seem thy influence here is so strong, that on my return there shall be further offerings on his account. Berchthold was very dear to me, and I would not have it said that all memory of the boy is lost beneath the ashes of Limburg."

Though both in their several ways were irascible, violent, and unaccustomed to control, neither Emich nor Bonifacius was wanting in that species of self-command, which is so necessary to men intrusted with the care of important interests. They had early learned to bring feeling more or less in subjection to their policy; and though not quite equal to a cold and managed display of indifference on such subjects as too closely crossed their views, it required a certain combination of excitement to induce either, unnecessarily, to betray his true emotions. Their personal intercourse had, in consequence of this affected moderation, been less violent and wrangling than would otherwise have proved, for it did not often happen that both found themselves wrought up to the point of explosion, precisely at the same instant; and he that happened to remain the coolest, stood as a check on the passions of him who had momentarily forgotten appearances. But for this fact, the ill-timed and ill-worded question of the Count might have produced an immediate rupture, to the injury of the pilgrims' interests, and to the great scandal of the brotherhood of Einsiedlen: as it was, however, Bonifacius listened with outward courtesy, and answered more like one that remembered his priestly office than his particular injuries.

"Had it been my good fortune, Herr Pilgrim," he said calmly, "to have remained in charge of altars so esteemed, as to be sought on such a behalf, thy application in favor of the youth would have received meet attention; but thou now addresseth a prelate, that, like thee, is indebted to the hospitality of these excellent brothers, for a roof to cover his head."

"Nay, I know not," added the Count, a little confused by this sudden humility, "but rather than desert so young a soul in this strait, and soul of a servitor whom I so much loved, that I would not even now endow some chapel—of a size and decorations suited to his station while living."

"On Limburg hill, Herr Emich?"

"Nay, excellent Bonifacius, thou forgettest our loving

treaty, this pilgrimage, and other conditions honorably fulfilled. Altars can never rise again on Limburg hill, for that were to lose sight of our oaths and promises, which would be a crying sin in both ; but altars and chapels may exist elsewhere. Give us then this grace, and look to our gratitude and justice for the reward."

Bonifacius smiled, for he felt his power, and he enjoyed it like a man conscious of having so lately been in the hands of the very baron, who now so earnestly beseeched his favor. It may not be easy for one educated in these later days, to understand the singular contradiction, which led Emich of Hartenburg, the destroyer of Limburg, thus to entreat a monk ; but he who would properly understand his character, must remember the durability of impressions made in youth, the dread mystery that is attached to the unknown future, and, most of all, the flagrant inconsistencies, that are always the fruits of a struggle between principles and interests,—between the force of reason and the desires of selfishness.

"Thou accusest me unwarrantably, when thou sayest that our oaths, or our loving treaty is forgotten, pious Pilgrim," returned the Benedictine ; "both are respected and well remembered, as thou wilt see, in the end. But there is a feature in this request of thine, that hath apparently escaped unwittingly one of thy known justice and impartiality. Thy forester is well known for having greatly affected the heresy that is ripe in Germany——"

"Nay, Bonifacius, here must be an error,"—interrupted the Count ; "thou hast his very mother in our pilgrimage ; and dost think a proselyte of Luther would undertake so grievous pain to satisfy Rome ?"

"We speak of the child, and not of the parent, Herr Pilgrim. Had all that were trained in better principles observed the opinions of their fathers, our age would have been spared this heresy. Of the boy's irreverence there can be little doubt, since mine own ears have been my witnesses."

"How, hast thou ever shrived the youth, reverend Abbot ?" demanded Emich in surprise. "I did not think thee of so great condescension to one of his hopes, nor—by the mass ! did I think the youth so weak as to touch on disputed points at the confessional !"

"There are other acknowledgments made, Herr Pilgrim, than those which are heard in the Church, or under the

cloak of her mysteries. There was formerly a question between us, noble Count, amicably settled, and in a merry manner that need not now be named."

"Touching certain vineyards!" rejoined Emich, laughing. "The fact is not so distant as to be forgotten, though neither my cousin nor this good Abbé proved as staunch in that matter as had been expected!"

"Thy forester did better service. Thou mayest also remember there were certain discussions then had, and that the bold boy ventured on a comparison of the tree trimmed of its useless branches, and the tree suffered to stand in its deformity."

"Wilt thou abandon a soul to jeopardy for speech light as this, Herr Bonifacius? God's justice! This promiseth but little in mine own behalf, at some future day. Berchtold, heated and warm in the interest of his lord, threw out hints that might otherwise have been spared; moreover, the greater the sinner, Father, the greater need of masses and prayers."

"This will not I gainsay—my objection goeth no farther than to urge that those who are willing to live by the counsels of Luther, should be also willing to seek salvation by his means."

"Friends and pilgrims," said the Abbot of Einsiedlen, approaching the table, from which he had retired a little, to converse more freely with the Abbot and the Knight of Rhodes—"the hour is at hand which has been set to celebrate an early mass in behalf of this pilgrimage. The bell is giving the first summons, and it is meet that we retire to prepare ourselves for the duty."

At this interruption Bonifacius, who saw a storm gathering, gladly arose, and instantly withdrew, the rest dropped off, according to their several conditions; Emich and his cousin retiring with the leisure of men more accustomed to make others wait, than of hastening their movements to the injury of their own convenience.

After perusing this scene, we admonish the reader to spare his remarks until the subject has been well pondered in his mind. In portraying what passed in the private refectory of the convent of our Lady of the Hermits, we wish to convey no censure on any particular persuasion, or sect, or order of Christians, but simply to exhibit the habits and opinions of the age in which the individuals of this legend existed. Let those who are disposed to be

hypercritical, or censorious in their remarks, coolly look around them, and, first making the necessary allowances for the new aspects of society, put the question, whether contradictions as apparent, inconsistencies nearly as irreconcilable with truth, and selfishness almost as gross and as unjust, are not now manifest equally among the adherents of Rome, and the proselytes of Luther, as any that have been here represented. We may claim to have improved on the opinions and practices of our predecessors, but we are still far from being the consistent and equitable creatures that, it is to be hoped, we are yet destined to become.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all.”—*King Henry VI.*

AMONG the expiations prescribed to the pilgrims of Duerckheim and Hartenburg, there had been included an especial and early morning service, the one to which they were now summoned. Time had been allowed the weaker portion of the party to rest, while the stronger had been employed in the manner described in the preceding chapter. Certain self-inflicted stripes it was taken for granted had been duly bestowed, at different periods, during the long journey from the Palatinate.

It was an hour after the separation of the Abbey guests that the procession of Benedictines swept out of the cloisters into the body of the church. Though far from being a community remarkable for the austerity of its practices, it was not unusual for monks of all orders, to quit their pallets on extraordinary occasions, and to break the stillness of night with the music and service of the altar. When the spirit comes thus fresh from repose, and in a disposition suited to the object, into the immediate presence of the Deity, incense and praise so free from the dross of humanity, must come nearer to that high purity which adorns the worship of angels than any other that can ascend from man, since it is at such a moment that all least feel the burthen of their corporeal adjunct.

Even in the daily parochial duty, the good Catholics still observe a uniformity and rigidity of practice that are unknown even in this land of Puritan origin. The church-

bell is heard in every village, with the first dawn of light; at indicated hours, all within hearing of its sound are admonished to recall their thoughts from earth, by addressing a prayer to God; and with the close of day, the flock is once again summoned to the fold, at the service of vespers. These are beautiful and touching memorials of our duty, and when practised in sincerity, cannot fail to keep the mind in better subjection to the great authority that directs all our destinies. In countries where the husbandmen dwell together in villages, the practice is easy, and we hold its loss to be one of the greatest disadvantages of our own diffuse distribution of rural population; a distribution which is also the reason why we must forever be wanting in several other features of social intercourse, that give to life more or less of its poetical charm. Happily there are, on the other hand, accompanying advantages that perhaps more than serve as offsets to this, as to most other similar anomalies in our usages.

The arrangements of a Benedictine chapel, and the decorations of its altars, together with the manner in which the brotherhood occupy their stalls in the choir, have been too often mentioned in these pages, to require repetition. Long accustomed to these exercises, the monks were early in their places, though they for whom the mass was to be said were not all as punctual.

Ulrike and Lottchen, with the rest of the females, entered the church in a body, while the men, as is usual in matters that touch the finer feelings, were the last. Emich and the Burgomaster, however, finally made their appearance, followed by their companions, the whole betraying by their drowsy air, that they had been endeavoring to sleep off the late repast, and to recover from their fatigue.

During the mass, the companions of Lottchen and Ulrike exhibited exemplary devotion, and a close attention to the service; but the gaping of the Count and his circle, the wandering eyes, and finally the profound repose of several, sufficiently showed that the ethereal part of their natures was altogether unequal to the mastery of that which was material.

There was a procession from the choir to the shrine, and prayers were said, as on the previous day, with the eyes of all riveted on the unearthly countenance of Maria. As each was left to judge for himself of the manner in

which he discharged his particular duties, there was a very sensible difference in the time occupied by the several devotees, in the performance of the common vows. The females appeared to be embodied with the stone, and there were entire minutes during which their motionless forms would have seemed to be as inanimate as the image on which they gazed but for the heaving of a breast, or an occasional tremor,—outward and visible signs of the workings of the spirit within. Meta kneeled between her mother and Lottchen, her whole soul apparently engrossed in devotion. As she studied the bright eye that gleamed upon her from the depths of that mysterious chapel, illuminated as it was by gorgeous and bright lamps, her fancy transformed the image into a being sainted and blessed by the choice of God ; and her own gentle spirit clung to the delusion, as one replete with a hope to cheer her own desolation. She thought of the future, and of the grave ; of the rewards of the just, and of Heaven ; of that endless eternity and its fruition in which she confided,—and the ties of earth began sensibly to lessen. There was a holy desire to be at rest. But, notwithstanding the spiritual nature of her employment, the form of Berchthold, gay in the green garb of a forester, with laughing eye, light step, and cheerful voice, mingled in all the pictures of her imagination. Now he appeared a saint, robed and bearded, as she had been wont to see those holy men represented in works of art, and yet, by a contradiction wrought by her own heart, always bright and youthful, and now she thought him gifted with wings, and united to the beings of that heavenly choir, which had so many representatives around her suspended between the roof and the pavement of the edifice. Singular as it may seem to some of our readers, so busy and so alluring was the working of her imagination at this thrilling moment, that the mourning and affectionate girl had rarely spent an hour of more holy enjoyment than this which she passed before the shrine of our Lady of the Hermits.

Very different were the sensations of Lottchen. Her griefs were those in which the fancy had no share. She wept for the child to which she had given birth ; for the stay of her age, and for the pride of her life. No fancy could betray the imagination of a mother, nor could any workings of the mind convert the sad reality into aught but the bitter truth. Still Lottchen found consolation in

her prayers. Religious faith was active, though imagination slumbered ; for nothing can be more different than the delusions of the one, and the deep sustained convictions of the other ; and she was able to find a solace for her sorrow, by looking with calm, Christian hope beyond the interests of life.

The sentiments and feelings of Ulrike differed from those of her friend, only in the degree, and in the peculiarity of those circumstances which directed her maternal solicitude to a still living object. But Ulrike, kind, true, and warm of heart, had tenderly regarded the lost Berchthold. Had there been no other motive than the fact of his being the offspring of Lottchen, she could not have been indifferent to him ; but, accustomed, as she had been for years, to look forward to his union with Meta, she felt his loss little less than she would have mourned over that of a child of her own.

Not so with Heinrich. The bold and spirited support he received from Berchthold during the assault, had sensibly won upon his esteem, for the affinities between the brave are amongst the strongest ; but the Burgomaster had not passed a life in the indulgence of a passion so engrossing, and so incurable, as the love of gain, readily to cast aside all his intentions and objects, at the impulse of a purely generous feeling. He would freely have given of his beloved stores to the youth ; but to bestow Meta was, in his eyes, to bestow all, and, under his habits, it seemed to be giving gold without an equivalent, to give his daughter's hand to a penniless husband. There are some who accumulate for the advantages that are incidental to wealth ; others hoard under the goadings of an abstract and nearly inexplicable passion ; while another set heap together their means, as boys roll up snow, with a delight in witnessing how large a mass may be collected by their agency. Heinrich was of the latter class, subject, however, to a relish for the general results of wealth, and like all men who deem money as an end and not as a means, he was in the practice of considering the last measure of his policy, which was intended to double the stock by the marriage of his daughter, as the happiest and the greatest stroke of a fortunate and prosperous life. And yet Heinrich Frey had his moments of strong natural feeling, and the manner in which Meta mourned for the death of Berchthold touched him, to a degree that might have disposed him to say he

regretted the fate of his young lieutenant as much on her account as on his own. It is more than probable, however, could Berchthold have been suddenly restored to life, that the Burgomaster would have returned to his former mode of thinking, and would have thought the resuscitation of the young forester sufficient, of itself, to assuage the grief of a whole family.

Heinrich and the Count were among the first to quit their suppliant attitudes before the shrine. They had each said the required number of prayers, and brushing their knees, the two pilgrims strolled away, deeper into the body of the church, like men well satisfied with themselves. But, while so ready to give relief to his own bones, the Burgomaster kept a vigilant eye on Dietrich, who, being a hired penitent, was expected to give Duerckheim the full worth of its money, in the way of mortifications and *aves*.

Most of the lights in the choir had been extinguished, and the aisles of the edifice were dimly visible, by means of a few scattered candles, that burned almost without ceasing, before the altars of different subordinate chapels. As they walked down the great aisle, Emich slowly laid a hand on the shoulder of his companion, seeming to invite his close attention, by the grave and meaning manner of the action.

"I could wish that our poor Berchthold, after all, had the virtue of masses from these servitors of our Lady of the Hermits!" said the Count. "If there be especial savor in any of this description of prayers, methinks it must be among men who watch a shrine of which they tell all these miracles!"

"Your wish, nobly-born-brother-pilgrim-and-friend, is but the expression of mine own. To own the truth, I have thought of little else, while going through the *aves*, but to devise the means of persuading the holy Abbot, at a reasonable rate, to change his mind, and honestly to let the youth's soul benefit by his intercessions."

"Thou hast not well bethought thee altogether, friend Heinrich, of thine own errand here!"

"Sapperment! What would you, Herr Emich, from a man of my years and education? One gets to be so ready with the words by oft repeating, that going through the beads is much like tapping with a finger while the eye looks over an account. But to speak of the boy—were we to bid higher for these masses, it might raise the present

price, and we be uselessly losers ; for, as I understand the question, the amount given in no manner changes the true value of the intercession to the defunct."

"Heinrich," returned the Count, musingly, "they say that Brother Luther denounces these *post-mortem* prayers, as vain and of none avail !"

"That would alter the case greatly, Lord Count-and-brother-pilgrim. One could wish to be sure in an affair of this delicacy, for if the Monk of Wittenberg hath reason of his side, we lose our gold ; and if he hath wrong, the soul of Berchthold may be none the better for our doubts !"

"We laymen are sorely pressed between the two opinions, worthy Burgomaster, and I could fain wish that these reformers would bring the question speedily to a conclusion. By the mass ! there are moments when I am ready to throw away the rosary, and to take Duke Friedrich of Saxony's side of the question, as being the most reasonable and manly. But, then again, should he prove wrong, thou know'st, Heinrich, we lose the benefit of chapels built, of *aves* said, of gold often paid, and the high protection of Rome ! Thou seest the strait of poor Berchthold, and this only for some little freedom of discourse !"

Heinrich sighed, for he felt the force of the dilemma, and he appeared to ponder well before he answered. Edging nearer to the Count, like a man who felt he was about to utter dangerous sentiments in a delicate situation, he whispered the reply.

"Here, Emich," he said, "we are but dust, and that of no very excellent quality. The potter's ware hath its utility, if well baked and otherwise prepared ; but of what use is man when the breath hath departed ? They say the soul remains, and that it must be cared for, neither of which will I dispute ; but is it reasonable to buy out a patent of salvation, for an intangible thing, with current coin ? Look to that knave, the smith !—Your pardon, nobly-born Count—but here hath our town engaged the rogue to do penance in its behalf, and my eyes are no sooner off him than his lips become as stationary as the wings of a mill in a calm. Duty to Duerckheim demands that I should give him a jog, after which, with your gracious leave, we will look further into the philosophy of that in which we were dealing."

So saying, the zealous Heinrich hurried down the aisle towards his religious mercenary, with a laudable and sensitive watchfulness over the interests of his constituents. He found the smith perfectly immovable, and it was only by repeated and vigorous shakes, that he succeeded in arousing his auxiliary from a profound slumber.

In the meanwhile, Emich walked on, still occupied by his reflections. On reaching the gate of the choir, he was about to retrace his steps, when he was privately beckoned, by one whose dusky form appeared at a side door of the church, to draw nearer. On approaching, Emich found that his old rival, Bonifacius, awaited his coming.

The salutations of these ancient enemies were courteous, but distant. After a short parley, however, they withdrew in company; and it was past the turn of the day, ere the Count of Hartenburg reappeared among the pilgrims. The details of what passed in this secret conference were never known to the public, though subsequent events gave reason to believe that they had reference to the final settlement of the long-contested existence of Limburg in the Jaegerthal. It was known generally in the Abbey, that the Abbot Rudiger made one of the council, and that its termination was friendly. Those who were disposed to be critical, intimated in after days, that in this dispute, as in most others in which the weak and humble lend themselves to the views of the great and the strong, they for whom the battle had been fought, and whose apparently implacable enmities had sown discord among their followers, suddenly found means to appease their resentments, and to still the tempest they had raised, in such a manner as to suffer most of its consequences to fall on the heads of their allies. This result, which appears to be universal with those who have the imprudence to connect themselves indissolubly with friends who can irretrievably dispose of their destinies, was perhaps to be looked for, since the man or the community that is so weak as to confide too implicitly in the faith of the powerful, whether considered individually or as nations, may at once consider itself a tool to favor views that have little connection with its own interests. In cases of this nature, men are wont to share the fate of the orange-skin, which is thrown away after being sucked; and communities themselves are apt to undergo some such changes as those which mark the existence of the courser, which is first pampered and caressed, then

driven upon the pole, and which commonly ends its career at the plow.

During the time Bonifacius and Emich were arranging their secret treaty, in the best manner that the former could hope for, in the actual state of Germany, and to the entire satisfaction of the latter, the ceremonies of the expiation proceeded. Aroused from his sleep, Dietrich endeavored to compensate for lost time by renewed diligence, and the Burgomaster himself, apprehensive that the negligence of the hireling might bring a calamity on the town, joined himself to the party, with as much zeal as if he had as yet done nothing towards effecting the object of their journey.

The sun had fallen far towards the west, when the pilgrims finally took their departure for the Palatinate. Father Arnolph was again at their head, and, blessed by the Abbot and in favor with the Church, the whole went their way, if not with lightened hearts, at least with bodies much refreshed, with hopes rekindled and with packs materially diminished in size.

Ulrike and Lottchen paused when they reached the boundary of the plain, where they could command a parting view of the Abbey. Here they, and Meta, and indeed most of the party, prayed long and fervently ; or at least so seemed to pray. When they arose from their knees, the Prior, whose whole time while at the convent had been deeply occupied by religious exercises, and whose spirit had been refreshed, in a degree proportioned to his sincerity and faith, came to the side of the principal group of the females, his eye beaming with holy hope, and his face displaying innate peace of mind.

"Ye are now, daughters, about to take leave, forever, of the shrine of our Lady of the Hermits," he said. "If ye have seen aught to lessen the high expectation with which the pious are apt to draw near this sacred altar, ascribe it to that frailty which is inherent in the nature of man ; and if ye have reaped consolation and encouragement from your offerings and prayers, ye may, with all security, impute it to the goodness of God. And thou, my child," he added with paternal tenderness, addressing Meta—"thou hast been sorely tried in thy young life—but God is with thee, as He is in yon blue sky—in that sun of molten gold—in yonder icy pile that props the heavens, and in all His works, that are so glorious in our eyes ! Turn with me to

yonder mountain, that from its form is called the Mitre. Regard it well—Dost see aught in particular?”

“’Tis an abrupt and dreary pile of rock, Father,” answered Meta.

“Seest thou naught else—on its highest summit.”

Meta looked intently, for in sooth there did appear on the uppermost pinnacle of the mass, an object so small, and so like a line, that, at first, she passed a hand across her eye to remove a floating hair from before her sight.

“Father!” exclaimed the girl, clasping her hands fervently, “I behold a cross!”

“That rock is the type of God’s durable justice ;—That cross is the pledge of His grace and love. Go thy way, daughter, and have hope.”

The pilgrims turned and descended the mountain in musing silence. That evening they crossed the lake, and slept within the ancient walls of the romantic town of Rapperschwyl. On the following day, the pilgrimage being now happily accomplished, they proceeded toward their own distant habitations, descending the Rhine in boats.

CHAPTER XXIX.

“But thou art clay—and canst but comprehend
That which was clay, and such thou shalt behold.”—*Cain.*

THE return of the pilgrims was a happy moment to all who dwelt in Duerckheim. Many prayers had been offered in their behalf, during the long absence, and divers vague reports of their progress and success had been eagerly swallowed by their friends and townsmen. When, however, the Burgomaster and his companions were actually seen entering their gates, the good citizens ran to and fro, in troubled delight, and the greetings, especially among the gentler sex, were mingled with many tears. Emich and his followers did not appear, having taken a private path to the castle of Hartenburg.

The simple and still Catholic (though wavering) burghers had felt many doubts concerning the fruits of their bold policy, while the expiatory penance was pending. Their town was in the midst of a region that is perhaps more pregnant with wild legends, even at this hour, than any

other of equal extent in Europe ; and it can be easily conceived that, under such circumstances, the imaginations of a people who had been, as it were, nurtured in superstition, would not be likely to slumber. In effect, numberless startling rumors were rife, in the town, the valley, and on the plain. Some spoke of fiery crosses gleaming at night above the walls of the fallen Abbey ; others whispered of midnight chants, and spectre-like processions, that had been heard or seen among the ruined towers ; while one peasant, in particular, asseverated that he had held discourse with the spirit of Father Johan. These tales found credulous auditors or not, according to the capacity of the listener ; and to these may be added another, that was accompanied by such circumstances of confirmation, as are apt momentarily to affect the minds of those, even, who are little wont to lend attention to any incidents of miraculous nature.

A peasant, in crossing the chase by a retired path, was said to have encountered Berchthold, clad in his dress of green, wearing the hunting-horn and cap, and girded with the usual *couteau-de-chasse*, or, in fine, much as he was first presented to the reader in our early pages. The youth was described to have been hot on the chase of a roebuck, and flushed with exercise. From time to time, he was said to wind his horn. The hounds were near, obedient as usual to his call, and indeed the vision was described as partaking of most of the usual accompaniments of the daily exercise of the forester.

Had the tale ended here, it might have passed off among the thousand other similar wonderful sights that were then related in that wonder-loving country, and been forgotten. But it was accompanied with positive circumstances, that addressed themselves, in a manner not to be disputed, to the senses. The two favorite hounds of the forester had been missing for some weeks, and, from time to time, cries resembling theirs were unequivocally heard, ringing among the arches of the forest, and filling the echoes of the mountains.

This extraordinary confirmation of the tale of the boor, occurred the week preceding the return of the pilgrims. The latter found their townsmen under a strong excitement from this cause, for that very day, nearly half the population of Duereckheim had been into the pass of the Haart which was described in the opening chapter of this

work, and with their own ears had heard the deep baying of the hounds. It was only after the first felicitations of the return were over, and during the night which followed, that the pilgrims learned this unusual circumstance. It reached Emich himself, however, ere his foot crossed the threshold of his castle.

On the following day, Duerckheim presented a picture of pleased but troubled excitement. Its population was happy in the return of their chosen and best, but troubled with the marvellous incident of the dogs, and by the wild rumors that accompanied it; rumors which thickened every hour by corroborating details from different sources. Early that very morning a new occurrence helped to increase the excitement.

From the moment that the Abbey was destroyed, not an individual had dared to enter its tottering walls. Two peasants of the Jaegerthal, incited by cupidity, had indeed secretly made the attempt, but they returned with the report of strange sights, and of fearful groans existing within the consecrated pile. The rumor of this failure, together with a lingering respect for altars that had been so long revered, effectually secured the spot against all similar expeditions. The alarm spread to the Heidenmauer, for, by a confusion of incidents, that is far from unusual in popular rumors, an account of Ilse, concerning the passage of the armed band through the cedars, on the night of the assault, coupled with the general distrust that was attached to the place, had been so perverted and embellished as effectually to leave the ancient camp to its solitude. Some said that even the spirits of the Pagans had been aroused by the sacrilege, from the sleep of centuries, and others argued that, as the hermit was known to have perished in the conflagration, it was a spot accursed. The secret of the true name, and of the history of the Anchorite, was now generally known, and men so blended the late events with former offences, as to create a theory to satisfy their own longings for the marvellous; though, as is usual in most of these cases of supernatural agency, it might not have stood the test of a severe logical and philosophical investigation.

During the night which succeeded the return of the pilgrims, there had been a grave consultation among the civic authorities, on the subject of all these extraordinary tales and spectacles. The alarm had reached an inconvenient point, and the best manner of quieting it was now

gravely debated. There was not a burgher present at the discussion, who felt himself free from the general uneasiness ; but men, and especially men in authority, ordinarily choose to affect a confidence they are frequently far from feeling. In this spirit, then, was the matter discussed and decided. We shall refer to the succeeding events for the explanation.

Just as the sun began to shed his warmth into the valley, the people of Duerckheim, with few exceptions, collected without that gate which the Count of Hartenburg had so unceremoniously forced. Here they were marshalled by citizens appointed to that duty, in the usual order of a religious procession. In front went the pilgrims, to whom an especial virtue was attached, in consequence of their recent journey ; then came the parochial clergy, with the ordinary emblems of Catholic worship ; the burghers succeeded, and last of all followed the women and children, without much attention to order. When all were duly arranged, the crowd proceeded, accompanied by a chant of the choristers, and taking the direction of Limburg.

"This is a short pilgrimage, brother Dietrich," said the Burgomaster, who in his quality of a Christian of peculiar savor was still associated with the smith, "and little likely to weary the limbs ; still had the town been as active and true as we who have visited the mountains, this little affair of a few barking hounds, and some midnight moans in the Abbey ruins, would have been ready settled to our hands. But a town without its head, is like a man without his reason."

"You count on an easy deliverance then, honorable Heinrich, from this outcry of devils and unbidden guests ! For mine own particular exercises, I will declare that, though sufficiently foot-sore with what hath already been done, I could wish the journey were longer, and the enemy more human."

"Go to, smith ; thou art not to believe above half of what thou hast heard. The readiness to give faith to idle rumors forms a chief distinction between the vagrant and the householder—the man of weakness, and the man of wisdom. Were it decent, between a magistrate and an artisan, I would hold thee some hazard of coin, now, that this affair turns out very different from what thou expectest ; and I do not account thee, Dietrich, an every-day swallower of lies."

"If your worship would but hint what a fair dealing man ought in truth to believe——?"

"Why, look you, smith, here is all that I expect from the inquiry, though we hunt and exercise for a month. It will be found that there is no pack of hounds at all, loose or in leash, but at most a dog or two, that may be beset or not, as the case shall prove; next, thou wilt see that this tale of Father Johan chasing young Berchthold, while the boy hunts a roebuck, is altogether an invention, since the monk was the last man to give loose to such a scampering, noisy device; as for the Forester, my life on it, his appearance too will end in footmarks, or perhaps some other modest sign that he desires the masses refused by the Benedictines; for I know not the youth that would be less likely needlessly to disturb a neighborhood, with his own particular concerns, than Berchthold Hintermayer, living or dead."

A general start, and a common murmur among his companions, caused Heinrich to terminate his explanations. The head of the procession had reached the gorge, and, as it was about to turn into the valley, the trampling of many hoofs became audible. Feelings so highly wrought were easily excited to a painful degree, and the common expectation, for the moment, seemed to be some supernatural exhibition. A whirlwind of dust swept round the point of the hill, and Count Emich, with a train of well-mounted followers, appeared from its cloud. It was so common to meet religious processions of this nature, that the Count would not have manifested surprise, had he been ignorant of the motive which induced the population of Duerckheim to quit its walls; but, already apprised of their intentions, he hastily dismounted and approached the Burgo-master, cap in hand.

"Thou goest to exercise, worshipful Emich," he said, "and love for my town hath quickened our steps, that no honor or attention should be wanting to those I love,—hast a place among thy pilgrims for a poor baron and his friends?"

The offer was gladly accepted, courage being quickened by every appearance of succor. Emich, though equipped as a cavalier, was therefore willingly received among his fellow-travellers. The delay caused by this interruption ended, the procession, or rather the throng, for eagerness and anxiety and curiosity had nearly broken all order, proceeded towards the ascent of the mountain.

The ruins of Limburg, then recent and still blackened with smoke, were found in the deep silence of utter desertion. To judge from appearances, not a footstep had trodden them, since the moment when the band of the assailants had last poured through the gates, after a tumultuous triumph which had been so chilled by the awful catastrophe of the falling roofs. If that party had drawn near the Abbey in expectation of a sudden and furious assault, this slowly advanced with a troubled apprehension of witnessing some fearful manifestation of superhuman power. Both were disappointed. The unresisted success of the assailants is known, and the procession now proceeded with the same impunity; though many a voice faltered in the chant as they entered the spoiled and desolate church. Nothing, however, occurred to justify their alarm.

Encouraged by this pacific tranquillity, and desirous of giving proofs of their personal superiority to vulgar terrors, the Count and Heinrich commanded the throng to remain in the great aisle of the church, while they proceeded together into the choir. They found the usual evidences of a fierce conflagration at every step, but nothing to create surprise, until they arrived at the mouldering altar.

"Himmel!" exclaimed the Burgomaster, hastily pulling back his noble friend by the cloak,—“Your foot was about to do disreverence to the bones of a Christian, my Lord Count!—For Christian Father Johan was, beyond all question, though one more given to damnation than to charity.”

Emich recoiled, for he saw in truth, that with heedless step, he had been near crushing these revolting remnants of mortality.

“Here died a wild enthusiast!” he said, moving the skeleton with the point of his sheathed sword.

“And here he is still, nobly-born Graf!—This settles the question of the monk chasing young Berchthold through the forest, and among the cedars of the Heidenmauer, and it would be well to show these remains to the people.”

The hint was improved, and the throng was summoned to bear witness, that the bones of Johan still lay on the precise spot, in which he had died. While the curious and the timid were whispering their opinions of this discovery, the two leaders descended to the crypt.

This portion of the edifice had suffered least by the fire. Protected by the superior pavement, and constructed altogether of stone, it had received no very material injury, but that which had been inflicted by the sledges of the invaders. Fragments of the tombs lay scattered on every side, and here and there a wreath of smoke had left its mark upon the wall; but Emich saw with regret, that he owed the demolition of the altar, and of the other memorials of his race, entirely to his own precipitation.

"I will cause the bones of my fathers to be interred elsewhere," he said, musingly :—"this is no sepulchre for an honored stock!"

"Umph!—They have long and creditably decayed where they lie, Herr Emich, and it would have been well had they been left beneath the cover of their ancient marbles; but our artisans showed unusual agility in this part of their toil, in honor, no doubt, of an illustrious house."

"None of my race shall sleep within walls accursed by Benedictines! Hark!—what movement is that above, good Heinrich?"

"The townsmen have doubtless fallen upon the bones of the hermit, and of young Berchthold. Shall we go up, Lord Count, and see that fitting reverence be paid their remains? The Forester has claims upon us all, and as for Odo Von Ritterstein, his crime would be deemed all the lighter in these days, moreover he was betrothed to Ulrike in their youth."

"Heinrich, thy wife was very fair;—she had many suitors!"

"I cry your mercy, noble Count; I never heard but of poor Odo, and myself. The former was put out of the question by his own madness, and as for the latter, he is such as Heaven was pleased to make him; an indifferent lover and husband if you will, but a man of some credit and substance among his equals."

The Count did not care to dispute the possession of these qualities with his friend, and they left the crypt, with a common desire to pay proper respect to the remains of poor Berchthold. To their mutual surprise the church was found deserted. By the clamor of voices without, however, it was easy to perceive that some extraordinary incident had drawn away the members of the procession, in a body. Curious to have so violent an interruption of the proceedings explained, the two chiefs, for Heinrich

was still entitled to be so styled, hastened down the great aisle, picking their way among fallen fragments, towards the great door. Near the latter, they were again shocked by the spectacle of the charred skeleton of Johan, which seemingly had been dropped under the impulse of some sudden and great confusion.

"Himmel!" muttered the Burgomaster, while he hurried after his leader, "they have deserted the bones of the Benedictine!—can it be, Lord Emich, that some fiery miracle, after all our unbelief, hath wrought this fear?"

Emich made no reply, but issued into the court with the air of an offended master. The first glimpse, however, that he caught of the group, which now thronged the ruined walls of the minor buildings, whence there was a view of the surrounding country, and particularly of parts of the adjacent hill of the Heidenmauer, convinced him that the present was no moment to exhibit displeasure. Climbing up a piece of fallen stone-work, he found himself on a fragment of wall, surrounded by fifty silent, wondering countenances, among whom he recognized several of his own most trusty followers.

"What meaneth this disrespect of the service, and so sudden an abandonment of the remains of the monk?" demanded the baron,—vainly looking about him, in the hope of finding some quicker explanation by means of his own eyes.

"Hath not my Lord the Count seen and heard?" muttered the nearest vassal.

"What—knave? I have seen naught, but pallid and frightened fools, nor heard more than beating hearts! Wilt thou explain this, varlet—for, though something of a rogue, thou, at least, art no coward?"

Emich addressed himself to Gottlob.

"It may not be so easy of explanation as is thought, Lord Count," returned the cow-herd gravely; "the people have come hither with this speed, inasmuch as the cries of the supernatural dogs have been heard, and some say the person of poor Berchthold hath been again seen!"

The Count smiled contemptuously, though he knew the speaker sufficiently well to be surprised at the concern which was very unequivocally painted in his face.

"Thou wert attached to my Forester?"

"Lord Emich, we were friends, if one of so humble station may use the word, when speaking of a youth that

served so near the person of our master. Like his, my own family once knew better days, and we often met in the chase, which I was wont to cross, coming or going to the pastures. I loved poor Berchthold, nobly-born Count, and still love his memory."

"I believe thou hast better stuff in thee than some idle and silly deeds would give reason to believe. I have remembered thy good will on various occasions, and especially thy cleverness in making the signals on the night these walls were overturned, and thou wilt find thyself named to the employment left vacant by my late Forester's unhappy end."

Gottlob endeavored to thank his master, but he was too much troubled by real grief for the loss of his friend, to find consolation in his own preferment.

"My services are my Lord Count's," he answered, "but, though ready to do as commanded, I could well wish that Berchthold were here to do that for me, which——"

"Listen!—Hark!"—cried a hundred voices.

Emich started, and bent forward in fixed attention. The day was clear and cloudless, and the air of the hills pure as a genial breeze and a bright sun could bestow. Favored by such circumstances, and amid a silence that was breathing and eloquent, there were borne across the valley the well-known cries of hounds on the scent. In that region and age none dared hunt, and indeed none possessed the means of hunting, but the feudal lord. Since the late events, his chases had been unentered with this view, and the death of Berchthold, who had especial privileges in this respect, had left them without another who might dare to imitate his habits.

"This is at least bold!" said Emich, when the cries had passed away; "hath any other near dogs of that noble breed?"

"We never heard of other!"

"None would dare use them," were the answers.

"I know those throats—they are, of a certainty, the favorite hounds of my poor Forester! Have not the dogs escaped the leash, to play their gambols at will among the deer?"

"In that case, Lord Count, would tried hounds remain abroad for weeks?" answered Gottlob. "It is now a sen-night since these cries have been first heard, and yet no one has seen the dogs, from that hour to this, unless as

some one of our hinds says they have in sooth been seen running madly on the scent."

"'Tis said, mein Herr Graf," put in another, "that Berchthold, himself, hath been viewed in their company, his garments floating in the wind, while he flew along, keeping even pace with the dogs, an' he had been swift of foot as they!"

"With Father Johan at his heels, cowl undone and robe streaming like a pennon, by way of religious amusement!" added the Count, laughing. "Dost not see, dotard, that the crackling bones of thy monk are still in the ruin?"

The hind was daunted by his master's manner, but nothing convinced. There then succeeded a long and expecting silence, for this little by-play near the Count had not in the least affected the solemn attention of the mass. At length the throats of these mysterious dogs again opened, and the cries indeed appeared like those of hounds rushing from beneath the cover of woods into the open air. In a few moments they were repeated and, beyond all dispute, they were now upon the open heath that surrounded the Teufelstein. The crisis grew alarming for the local superstitions of such a place, in the commencement of the sixteenth century. Even Emich wavered. Though he had a vague perception of the inconsistency of living dogs being hunted by a dead Forester, still there were so many means of getting over this immaterial difficulty, when the greater point of the supernatural chase was admitted, that he found little relief in the objection. Descending from the wall, he was in the act of beckoning the priests and Heinrich to his side, when a general shout arose among the male spectators, while the women rushed in a body around Ulrike, who was kneeling, with Lottchen and Meta, before the great crucifix of the ancient court of the convent. In the twinkling of an eye, Emich re-occupied his place on the wall, which shook with the impetus of his heavy rush.

"What meaneth this disrespectful tumult?" angrily demanded the baron.

"The hounds!—mein Herr Graf!—the hounds!" answered fifty breathless peasants.

"Explain this outcry, Gottlob."

"My Lord Count, we have seen the dogs leaping past yonder margin of the hill—here—just in a line with the spot where the Tuefelstein lies. I know the dear animals

well, Herr Emich, and believe me, they are truly the old favorites of Berchthold!"

"And Berchthold!" continued one or two of the more decided lovers of the marvellous—"we saw the late Forester, great Emich, bounding after the dogs, an' he had wings!"

The matter grew serious, and the Count slowly descended to the court, determined to bring the affair to some speedy explanation.

CHAPTER XXX.

"By the Apostle Paul, shadows to-night
Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard,
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers."—*Richard III.*

THE consultation that now took place was between the principal laymen. The connection which the Church had so long maintained with supernatural agencies determined Emich, who was jealous of its again obtaining its lost ascendancy in that country, to exclude the officiating priests altogether from the decision he was about to take. Were we to say that the Count of Hartenburg gave full faith to the rumors concerning the spirit of his late Forester, having been seen engaged in the chase, as when in the flesh, we should probably not do entire credit to his intelligence and habits of thinking; but were we to say that he was altogether free from superstition and alarm on this difficult point, we should attribute to him a degree of philosophy and a mental independence which in that age was the property only of the learned and reflecting, and not always even of them. Astrology, in particular, had taken strong hold of the imaginations of those who even pretended to general science; and when the mind once admits of theories of a character so little in accordance with homely reason, it opens the avenues to a multitude of collateral weaknesses of the same nature, which seem to follow as the necessary corollaries of the main proposition.

The necessity of a prompt solution of the question was admitted by all of those whom the Count consulted. Many had begun to whisper that the extraordinary visitation was a consequence of the sacrilege, and that it was

hopeless to expect peace, or exemption from supernatural plagues, until the Benedictines were restored to their Abbey and their former rights. Though Emich felt convinced that this idea came originally from the monks, through some of their secret and paid agents, he saw no manner of defeating it so effectually as that of demonstrating the falsity of the rumor. In our time, and in this land, a weapon that was forged by a miracle would be apt to become useless of itself ; but in the other hemisphere there still exist entire countries that are yet partially governed by agents of this description. At the period of the tale, the public mind was so uninstructed and dependent that the very men who were most interested in defeating the popular delirium of the hour, had great difficulty in overcoming their own doubts. It has been seen that Emich, though much disposed to throw off the dominion of the Church, so far clung to his ancient prejudices as secretly to distrust the very power he was about to defy, and to entertain grave scruples not only of the policy, but of the lawfulness of the step his ambition had urged him to adopt. In this manner does man become the instrument of the various passions and motives that beset him, now yielding, or now struggling to resist, as a stronger inducement is presented to his mind ; always professing to be governed by reason and constrained by principles, while in truth he rarely consents to consult the one, or to respect the other, until both are offered through the direct medium of some engrossing interest that requires an immediate and active attention. Then indeed his faculties become suddenly enlightened, and he eagerly presses into his service every argument that offers, the plausible as well as the sound ; and thus it happens that we frequently see whole communities making a moral pirouette in a breath, adopting this year a set of principles that are quite in opposition to all they had ever before professed. Fortunately, all that is thus gained on sound principles is apt to continue, since whatever may be the waywardness of those who profess them, principles themselves are immutable, and when once fairly admitted, are not easily dispossessed by the bastard doctrines of expediency and error. These changes are gradual as respect those avant-couriers of thought, who prepare the way for the advance of nations, but who, in general, so far precede their contemporaries, as to be utterly out of view at the effectual moment of the reforma-

tion, or revolution, or by whatever name these sudden summersets are styled ; but as respects the mass, they often occur by a coup-de-main ; an entire people awakening, as it were, by magic, to the virtues of a new set of maxims, much as the eye turns from the view of one scenic representation to that of its successor.

Our object in this tale is to represent society, under its ordinary faces, in the act of passing from the influence of one set of governing principles to that of another. Had our efforts been confined to the workings of a single and a master mind, the picture, however true as regards the individual, would have been false in reference to a community ; since such a study would have been no more than following out the deductions of philosophy and reason—something the worse, perhaps, for its connection with humanity ; whereas, he that would represent the world, or any material portion of the world, must draw the passions and the more vulgar interests in the boldest colors, and be content with portraying the intellectual part in a very subdued background. We know not that any will be disposed to make the reflection that our labors are intended to suggest, and without which they will scarcely be useful ; but, while we admit the imperfection of what has been here done, we feel satisfied that he who does consider it coolly and in candor, will be disposed to allow that our picture is sufficiently true for its object.

We have written in vain, should it now be necessary to dwell on the nature of the misgivings that harassed the minds of the Count and Heinrich, as they descended the hill of Limburg at the head of the new procession. Policy, and the determination to secure advantages that had been so dearly obtained, urged them on ; while doubt and all the progeny of ancient prejudices contributed to their distrust.

The people advanced much in the same order as that in which they had ascended to the ruins of the Abbey. The pilgrims were in front, followed closely by the parochial priests and their choirs ; while the rest succeeded in an eager, trembling, curious, and devout crowd. Religious change existed, as yet, rather in doctrine, and among the few, than in the practices of the many ; and all the rites, it will be remembered, were those usually observed by the Church of Rome on an occasion of exorcism, or of an especial supplication to be released from a mysterious dis-

play of Heaven's displeasure. The Count and Heinrich, as became their stations, walked boldly in advance; for, whatever might have been the extent and nature of their distrust, it was wisely and successfully concealed from all but themselves—even the worthy Burgomaster entertained a respectful opinion of the noble's firmness, and the latter much wondering at a man of Heinrich's education and habits of life being able to show a resolution that he thought more properly belonged to philosophy. They passed up towards the plain of the Heidenmauer, by the hollow way that has already been twice mentioned in these pages—once in the Introduction, and again as the path by which Ulrike descended on her way to the Abbey, on the night of its destruction. Until near the summit, nothing occurred to create new uneasiness; and as the choristers increased the depth of their chant, the leaders began to feel a vague hope of escaping from farther interruption. As the moments passed, the Count breathed freer, and he already fancied that he had proved the Heidenmauer to be a spot as harmless as any other in the Palatinate.

"You have often pricked courser over this wild common of the Devil, noble and fearless Count," said Heinrich, when they drew near the margin of the superior plain. "One so accustomed to its view is not easily troubled by the cries and vagaries of a leash of uneasy dogs, though they might be kennelled beneath the shades of the Teufelstein!"

"Thou mayest well say often, good Heinrich. When but an urchin, my excellent father was wont to train his chargers on this height, and it was often my pleasure to be of the party. Then our hunts frequently drove the deer from the cover of the chases to this open ground——"

The Count paused, for a swift, pattering rush, like that of the feet of hounds beating the ground, was audible, just above their heads, though the edge of the mountain still kept the face of the level ground from being seen. Spite of their resolution, the two leaders came to a dead halt—a delay which those in the rear were compelled to imitate.

"The common hath its tenants, Herr Frey," said Emich, gravely, but in a tone of a man resolute to struggle for his rights; "it will soon be seen if they are disposed to admit the sovereignty of their feudal lord."

Without waiting for an answer, the Count spite of him-

self muttered an *ave*, and mounted with sturdy limbs to the summit. The first glance was rapid, uneasy and distrustful; but nothing rewarded the look. The naked rock of the Teufelstein lay in the ancient bed—where it had probably been left, by some revolution of the earth's crust, three thousand years before—gray, solitary, and weather-worn as at this hour; the grassy common had not a hoof or foot over the whole of its surface; and the cedars of the deserted camp sighed in the breeze, as usual, dark, melancholy, and suited to the traditions which had given them interest.

"Here is nothing!" said the Count, drawing a heavy breath, which he would fain ascribe to the difficulty of the ascent.

"Herr von Hartenburg, God is here, as he is among the hills we have lately quitted—on that fair and wide plain below—and in thy hold——"

"Prithee, good Ulrike, we will of this another time. We touch now on the destruction of a silly legend, and of some recent alarms."

At a wave of his hand the procession proceeded, taking the direction of the ancient gateway of the camp, the choir renewing its chant, and the same leaders always in advance.

It is not necessary to say that the Heidenmauer was approached on this solemn occasion with beating hearts. No man of reflection and proper feeling can ever visit a spot like this without fancying a picture that is fraught with pleasing melancholy. The certainty that he has before his eyes the remains of a work, raised by the hands of beings who existed so many centuries before him in that great chain of events which unites the past with the present, and that his feet tread earth that has been trodden equally by the Roman and the Hun, is sufficient of itself to raise a train of thought allied to the wonderful and grand. But to these certain and natural sensations was now added a dread of omnipotence and the apprehension of instantly witnessing some supernatural effect.

Not a word was uttered, until Emich and the Burgo-master turned to pass the pile of stones which mark the position of the ancient wall, by means of the gateway already named, when the former, encouraged by the tranquillity, again spoke.

"The ear is often a treacherous companion, friend Bur-

gomaster," he said, "and like the tongue, unless duly watched, may lead to misunderstandings. No doubt we both thought, at the moment, that we heard the feet of hounds beating the earth, as on a hunt; thou now seest, by means of one sense, that the other hath served us false. But we approach the end of our little pilgrimage, and we will halt, while I speak the people in explanation of our opinions and intentions."

Heinrich gave the signal, and the choir ceased its chant, while the crowd drew near to listen. The Count both saw and felt that he touched the real crisis, in the furtherance of his own views, as opposed to those of the brotherhood, and he determined, by a severe effort, not only to overcome his enemies, but himself. In this mood, he spoke.

"Ye are here, my honest friends and vassals," he commenced, "both as the faithful who respect the usefulness of the altar when rightly served, and as men who are disposed to see and judge for themselves. This camp, as ye witness by its remains, was once occupied by armed bands of warriors who, in their day, fought and fortified, suffered and were happy, bled and died, conquered or were vanquished, much as we see those who carry arms in our own time, perform these several acts, or submit to these several misfortunes. The report that their spirits frequent this spot, is as little likely to be true, as that the spirits of all who have fallen with arms in their hands remain near the earth that hath swallowed their blood; a belief that would leave no place in our fair Palatinate without its ghostly tenant. As for this late alarm, concerning my forester, poor Berchthold Hintermayer, it is the less probable from the character of the youth, who well knew when living the disrelish I have for all such tales, and my particular desire to banish them altogether from the Jaegerthal, as well as from his known modesty and dutiful obedience. You see plainly that here are no dogs——"

Emich met with a startling contradiction. Just as his tongue, which was getting fluent with the impunity that had so far attended his declarations, uttered the latter word, the long drawn cries of hounds were heard. Fifty strong German exclamations escaped the crowd, which waved like a troubled sea. The sounds came from among the trees in the very centre of the dreaded Heidenmauer, and seemed only the more unearthly from rising beneath that gloomy canopy of cedars.

"Let us go on!" cried the Count, excited nearly to madness, and seizing the handle of his sword with iron grasp. "'Tis but a hound! Some miscreant hath loosened the dog from his leash, and he scents the footsteps of his late master, who had the habit of visiting the holy hermit that dwelt here of late——"

"Hush!" interrupted Lottchen, advancing hurriedly, and with a wild eye, from the throng of females. "God is about to reveal his power for some great end! I know—I know—that footstep——"

She was fearfully interrupted, for while speaking, the hounds rushed out of the grove, in the swift, mad manner common to the animal, and made a rapid circuit around the form of the dazzled and giddy woman. In the next moment, a tottering wall gave way to the powerful leap of a human foot, and Lottchen lay senseless on the bosom of her son!

We draw a veil before the sudden fear, the general surprise, the tears, the delight, and the more regulated joy of the next hour.

At the end of that period, the scene had altogether changed. The chant was ended, the order of the procession was forgotten, and a burning curiosity had taken place of all sensations of superstitious dread. But the authority of Emich had driven the crowd back upon the common of the Teufelstein, where it was compelled to content itself, for the moment, with conjectures, and with tales of similar sudden changes from the incarnate to the carnate, that were reputed to have taken place in the eventful history of the borders of the Rhine.

The principal group of actors had retired a little within the cover of the cedars, where, favored by the walls and the trees, they remained unseen from without. Young Berchthold was seated on a fragment of fallen wall, supporting his still half-incredulous mother in his arms, a position which he had received the Count's peremptory, but kind orders to occupy. Meta was kneeling before Lottchen, whose hand she held in her own, though the bright eye and glowing face of the girl followed, with undisguised and ingenuous interest, every glance and movement of the countenance of the youth. The emotions of that hour were too powerful for concealment, and had there been any secret concerning her sentiments, surprise and the sudden burst of feeling that was its consequence,

would have wrung it from her heart. Ulrike kneeled too, supporting the head of her friend, but smiling and happy. The Knight of Rhodes, the Abbe, Heinrich, and the smith, paced back and forth, as sentinels, to keep the curious at a distance, though occasionally stopping to catch sentences of the discourse. Emich leaned on his sword, rejoicing that his apprehensions were groundless, and we should do injustice to his rude but not ungenerous feelings, did we not say, glad to find that Berchthold was still in the flesh. When we add that the dogs played their frisky gambols around the crowd on the common, which could hardly yet believe in their earthly character, our picture is finished.

The deserving of this world may be divided into two great classes; the actively and the passively good. Ulrike belonged to the former, for though she felt as strongly as most others, an instinctive rectitude rarely failed to suggest some affirmative duty for every crisis that arrived. It was she, then (and we here beg to tell the reader plainly, she is our heroine), that gave such a direction to the discourse as was most likely to explain what was unknown, without harassing anew feelings that had been so long and so sorely tried.

"And thou art now absolved from thy vow, Berchthold!" she asked, after one of those short interruptions, in which the exquisite happiness of such a meeting was best expressed by silent sympathy. "The Benedictines have no longer any claim to thy silence?"

"They set the return of the pilgrims as their own period, and, as I first learned the agreeable tidings by seeing you all in the procession, I had called in the hounds, who were scouring the chase, and was about to hurry down to present myself, when I met you all at the gateway of the camp. Our meeting would have taken place in the valley, but that duty required me first to visit the Herr Odo Von Ritterstein——"

"The Herr Von Ritterstein!" exclaimed Ulrike, turning pale.

"What of my ancient comrade, the Herr Odo, boy?" demanded Emich. "This is the first we have heard of him since the night the Abbey fell."

"I have told my tale badly," returned Berchthold, laughing and blushing, for he was neither too old nor too practised to blush, "since I have forgotten to name the Herr Odo."

"Thou told us of a companion," rejoined his mother, glancing a look at Ulrike, and raising herself from the support of her son, instinctively alive to her friend's embarrassment, "but thou called him merely a religious."

"I should have said the holy Hermit, whom all now know to be the Baron Von Ritterstein. When obliged to fly from the falling roof, I met the Herr Odo kneeling before an altar, and recalling the form of one who had shown me much favor, it was he that I dragged with me to the crypt.—I surely spoke of our wounds and helplessness!"

"True ; but without naming thy companion."

"It was the Herr Odo, Heaven be praised ! When the monks found us, on the following day, unable to resist, and weakened with hunger and loss of blood, we were secretly removed together, as ye have heard, and cared for in a manner to restore us both, in good time, to our strength and to the use of our limbs. Why the Benedictines chose to keep us secret, I know not ; but this silly tale of the supernatural huntsman, and of dogs loosened from their leash, would seem to prove that they had hopes of still working on the superstition of the country."

"Wilhelm of Venloo had nought to do with this !" exclaimed Emich, who had been musing deeply. "The underlings have continued the game after it was abandoned by their betters."

"This may be so, my good Lord ; for I thought Father Bonifacius more than disposed to let us depart. But we were kept until the matters of the compensation and of the pilgrimage were settled. They found us easy abettors in their plot, if plot to work upon the fears of Duerckheim was in their policy ; for when they pledged their faith that my two mothers and dearest Meta had been let into the secret of our safety, I felt no extraordinary haste to quit leeches so skilful, and so likely to make a speedy cure of our hurts."

"And did Bonifacius affirm this lie ?"

"I say not the Abbot, my Lord Count, but most certainly the Brothers Cuno and Siegfried said all this and more—the malediction of a wronged son, and of a most foully treated mother——"

His mouth was stopped by the hand of Meta.

"We will forgive past sorrow for the present joy," murmured the weeping girl.

The angry and flushed brow of Berchthold grew more calm, and the discourse continued in a gentler strain.

Emich now walked away to join the Burgomaster, and together they endeavored to penetrate the motives which had led the monks to practise their deception. In the possession of so effectual a key, the solution of the problem was not difficult. The meeting of Bonifacius and the Count of Einsiedlen had been maturely planned, and the uncertain state of the public mind in the valley and town was encouraged as so much make-weight in the final settlement of the Convent's claims; for in that age, the men of the cloisters knew well how to turn every weakness of humanity to good purpose, so far as their own interests were concerned.

CHAPTER XXXI.

'Tis over, and her lovely cheek is now
On her hard pillow."—ROGERS.

ON the following morning the Count of Hartenburg took horse at an early hour. His train, however, showed that the journey was to be short. But Monsieur Latouche, who mounted in company, wore the attire and furniture of a traveller. It was in truth the moment when Emich, having used this quasi churchman for his own ends, was about to dismiss him, with as much courtesy and grace as the circumstances seemed to require. Perhaps no picture of the different faces presented by a Church that had so long enjoyed an undisputed monopoly in Christendom, and which, as a consequence, betrayed so strong a tendency to abuses, would have been complete without some notice of such characters as the Knight of the Cross and the Abbé; and it was, moreover, our duty, as faithful chroniclers, to speak of things as they existed, although the accessories might not have a very capital connection with the interest of the principal subject. But here our slight relations with the Abbé are to cease altogether, his host having treated him, as many politic rulers treat others of his profession, purely as the instrument of his own views. Albrecht of Viederbach was prepared to accompany his boon associate far as Mannheim, but with the intention to return,

the unsettled state of his order, and his consanguinity with the Count, rendering such a course both expedient and agreeable. Young Berchthold, too, was in the saddle, his lord having, by especial favor, commanded the Forester to keep at his crupper.

The cavalcade ambled slowly down the Jaegerthal, the Count courteously endeavoring to show the departing Abbé, by a species of misty logic that appears to be the poetical atmosphere of diplomacy, that he was fully justified by circumstances for effecting all that had been done, and the latter acquiescing as readily in his conclusions as if he did not feel that he had been an egregious dupe.

"Thou wilt see this matter rightly represented among thy friends, Master Latouche," concluded the Baron—"should there be question of it, at the court of thy Francis:—whom may Heaven quickly restore to his longing people—the right valiant and loyal Prince and gentleman!"

"I will take upon myself, high-born and ingenuous Emich, to see thee fully justified, whenever there shall be discussion of thy great warfare and exquisite policy at the court of France. Nay—by the mass! should our jurists, or our statesmen take upon themselves to prove to the world that thy house hath been wrong in this immortal enterprise, I pledge thee my faith to answer their reasons, both logically and politically, to their eternal shame and confusion."

As Monsieur Latouche uttered this promise with an unequivocal sneer, he thought himself fully avenged for the silly part he had been made to act in the Count's intrigues. At a later day he often told the tale, always concluding with a recital of this bold and ironical allusion to the petty history of the Jaegerthal, which not only he, but a certain portion of his listeners, seemed to think gave him altogether the best of the affair. Satisfied with his success, the Abbé pricked on, to repeat it to the knight, who laughed in his sleeve at his friend while he most extolled his wit, the two riding ahead in a manner to leave Emich an occasion to speak in confidence with his Forester.

"Hast treated of this affair with Heinrich, as I bid thee, boy?" demanded the Count, in a manner between authority and affection, that he was much accustomed to use with Berchthold.

"I have, my Lord Count, and right pressingly, as my heart urged, but with little hope of benefit."

"How?—Doth the silly burgher still count upon his marks, after what hath passed! Didst tell him of the interest I take in the marriage, and of my intent to name thee to higher duties, in my villages?"

"None of these favors were forgotten, or aught else that a keen desire could suggest, or a willing memory recall."

"What answer had the burgher?"

Berchthold colored, hesitating to reply. It was only when Emich sternly repeated the question, that the truth was extorted from him; for naught but truth would one so loyal consent to use.

"He said, Herr Count, that if it was your pleasure to name a husband for his child, it should also be your pleasure to see that he was not a beggar. I do but give the words of the Herr Frey; for which liberty, I beg my lord to hold me free of all disrespect."

"The niggardly miser! These hounds of Duerckheim shall be made to know their master—But be of cheer, boy; our tears and pilgrimages shall not be wasted, and thou shalt soon wive with a fairer and better, as becometh him I love."

"Nay, Herr Emich, I do beseech and implore——"

"Ha! Yon is the drivelling Heinrich seated on a rock of this ravine, like a vidette watching the marauders! Prick forward, Berchthold, and desire my noble friends to tarry at the Town-Hall making their compliments;—as for thee, thou mayest humor thy folly, and greet the smiling face of the pretty Meta the while."

The Forester dashed ahead like an arrow: while the Count reined his own courser aside, turning into that ravine by which the path led to the Heidenmauer, when the ascent was made from the side of the valley. Emich was soon at the Burgomaster's side, having thrown his bridle to a servitor that followed.

"How is this, brother Heinrich!" he cried, displeasure disappearing in habitual policy and well practised management—"art still bent on exorcism, or hast neglected some offices, in yester's pilgrimage?"

"Praised be St. Benedict, or Brother Luther!—for I know not fairly to which the merit is most due—our Duerckheim is in a thrice happy disposition, as touching

all witchcraft, and devilry, or even churchly miracles. This mystery of the hounds being so happily settled, the public mind seemeth to have taken a sudden change, and from sweating in broad daylight at the nestling of a mouse, or the hop of a cricket, our crones are ready to set demonology and Lucifer himself at defiance."

"The lucky clearing up of that difficulty will, in sooth, do much to favor the late Saxon opinions and may go near to set the monk of Wittenberg firmly upon his feet, in our country. Thou seest, Heinrich, that a dilemma so unriddled is worth a library of musty Latin maxims."

"That is it, Herr Emich, and the more especially as we are a reasoning town. Our minds once fairly enlightened, it is no easy matter to throw them into the shade again. It was seen how sorely the best of us were troubled with a couple of vagrant dogs so lately as yesterday, and now I much question if the whole of the gallant pack would so much as raise a doubt! We have had a lucky escape, Lord Count, for another day of uncertainty would have gone nigh to set up Limburg church again, and that without the masonry of the devil. There is naught so potent in an argument, as a little apprehension of losses or of plagues thrown into the scale. Wisdom weighs light against profit or fear."

"It is well as it is, though Limburg roof will never again cover Limburg wall, friend Heinrich, while an Emich rules in Hartenburg and Duerckheim."—The Count saw the cloud on the Burgomaster's brow as he uttered the latter word, and slapping him familiarly on a shoulder, he added so quickly as to prevent reflection:—"But how now, Herr Frey; why art at watch in this solitary ravine?"

Heinrich was flattered by the noble's condescension, and not displeased to have a listener to his tale. First looking about him to see that no one could overhear their discourse, he answered on a lower key, in the manner in which communications that need confidence are usually made.

"You know, Herr Emich, this weakness of Ulrike, concerning hermitages and monks, altars and saints' days, with all those other practices of which we may now reasonably expect to be quit, since late rumors speak marvels of Luther's success. Well, the good woman would have a wish to come upon the Heidenmauer this morning, and as there had been some warm argument between us, and the poor wife had wept much concerning marrying our child with

young Berchthold, a measure out of all prudence and reason, as you must see, nobly-born Count, I was fain willing to escort her thus far, that she might give vent to her sorrow in godly discourse with the hermit."

"And Ulrike is above, in the cedars, with the anchorite?"

"As sure as I am here waiting her return, Lord Count."

"Thou art a gallant husband, Master Frey!—Wert wont of old to resort much with the Herr Odo Von Ritterstein—he who playeth this masquerade of penitence and seclusion?"

"Sapperment!—I never could endure the arrogant! But Ulrike fancieth he hath qualities that are not so evil, and a woman's taste, like a child's humors, is easiest altered by giving it scope."

Emich laid both hands on the shoulders of his companion, looking him full and earnestly in the face. The glances that were exchanged in this attitude, were pregnant with meaning. That of the Count expressed the distrust, the contempt, and the wonder of a man of loose life, while that of the Burgomaster, by appearing to reflect the character of the woman who had so long been his wife, expressed volumes in her favor. No language could have said more for Ulrike's principles and purity, than the simple, hearty, and unalterable confidence of the man who necessarily had so many opportunities of knowing her. Neither spoke, until the Count, releasing his grasp, walked slowly up the mountain, saying in a voice which proved how strongly he felt—

"I would thy consort had been noble, Heinrich!"

"Nay, my good lord," answered the Burgomaster, "the wish were scarcely kind to a friend! In that case, I could not have wived the Frau."

"Tell me, good Heinrich—for I never heard the history of thy love—wert thou and thy proposal well received, when first offered to the virgin heart of Herr Hailtzinger's daughter?"

The Burgomaster was not displeased with an opportunity of alluding to a success that had made him the envy of his equals.

"The end must speak for the means, Herr Count," he answered chuckling. "Ulrike is none of your free and froward spirits to jump out of a window, or to meet a youth more than half-way, but such encouragement as becometh maiden diffidence was not wanting, or mine own

ill opinion of myself might have kept me a bachelor to this hour."

Emich chafed to hear such language coming from one he so little respected, and applied to one he had really loved. The effort to swallow his spleen produced a short silence, of which we shall avail ourselves to transfer this scene to the hut of the hermit, where there was an interview that proved decisive of the future fortunes of several of the characters of our tale.

The day which succeeded the restoration of Berchthold had been one of general joy and felicitation in Duerckheim. There was an end to the doubts of the timid and superstitious, concerning an especial and an angry visitation from Heaven, as a merited punishment for overturning the altars of the Abbey, and few were so destitute of good feeling, not to sympathize in the happiness of those who had so bitterly mourned the fancied death of the Forster. As is usual in cases of violent transitions, the reaction helped to lessen the influence of the monks, and even those most inclined to doubt were now encouraged to hope that the religious change, which was so fast gaining ground, might not produce all the horrors that had been dreaded.

Heinrich has revealed the nature of the discussion that took place between himself and his wife. The latter had endeavored in vain to seize the favorable moment to work upon the feelings of the Burgomaster, in the interests of the lovers; but though sincerely glad that a youth who had shown such mettle in danger was not the victim of his courage, Heinrich was not of a temperament to let any admiration of generous deeds affect the settled policy of a whole life. It was at the close of this useless and painful conference, that the mother suddenly demanded permission of her husband to visit the hermit, who had been left, as before the recent events, in undisturbed possession of the dreaded Heidenmauer.

Any other than a man constituted like Heinrich might, at such a moment, have heard this request with distrust. But strong in his opinion of himself, and accustomed to confide in his wife, the obstinate Burgomaster hailed the application as a means of relieving him from a discussion, in which, while he scarce knew how plausibly to defend his opinion, he was resolutely determined not to yield. The manner in which he volunteered to accompany his wife,

and in which he remained patiently awaiting her return, and the commencement of his dialogue with Emich are known. With this short explanation, we shall shift the scene to the hut of the anchorite.

Odo of Ritterstein was pale with loss of blood from the wounds received from a fragment of the falling roof, but paler still by the force of that inward fire which consumed him. The features of his fair and gentle companion were not bright, as usual, though naught could rob Ulrike of that winning beauty which owed so much of its charm to expression. Both appeared agitated with what had already passed between them, and perhaps still more by those feelings, which each had struggled to conceal.

"Thou hast indeed had many moving passages in thy life, Odo," said the gentle Ulrike, who was seemingly listening to some recital from the other's lips; "and this last miraculous escape from death is among the most wonderful."

"That I should have perished beneath the roof of Limburg, on the anniversary of my crime, and with the fall of those altars I violated, would have been so just a manifestation of Heaven's displeasure, Ulrike, that even now I can scarce believe I am permitted to live! Thou then thought in common with others, that I had been released from this life of woe?"

"Thou lookest with an unthankful eye at what thou hast of hope and favor, or thou wouldst not use a term so ungrateful in speaking of thy sorrows. Remember, Odo, that our joys, in this being, are tainted with mortality, and that thy unhappiness does not surpass that of thousands who still struggle with their duties."

"This is the difference between the unquiet ocean and tranquil waters—between the oak and the reed! The current of thy calm existence may be ruffled by the casual interruption of some trifling obstacle, but the gentle surface soon subsides, leaving the element limpid and without stain! Thy course is that of the flowing and pure spring, while mine is the torrent's mad and turbulent leaps. Thou hast indeed well said, Ulrike, God did not form us for each other!"

"Whatever nature may have done towards suiting our dispositions and desires, Odo, Providence and the world's usages have interposed to defeat."

The hermit gazed at the mild speaker with eyes so fixed and dazzling, that she bowed her own look to the earth.

"No," he murmured rapidly, "Heaven and earth have different destinies—the lion and the lamb different instincts!"

"Nay, I will none of this disreputable depreciation of thyself, poor Odo. That thou hast been erring, we shall not deny—for who is without reproach?—but that thou meritest these harsh epithets, none but thyself would venture to affirm."

"I have met with many enigmas, Ulrike, in an eventful and busy life—I have seen those who worked both good and evil—encountered those who have defeated their own ends by their own wayward means—but never have I known one so devoted to the right, that seemed so disposed to extenuate the sinner's faults!"

"Then hast thou never met the true lover of God or known a Christian. It matters not, Odo, whether we admit of this or that form of faith—the fruit of the right tree is charity and self-abasement, and these teach us to think humbly of ourselves and kindly of others."

"Thou began early to practise these golden rules, or surely thou never wouldst have forgotten thine own excellence, or have been ready to sacrifice it to the heedless impulses of one so reckless as him to whom thou wast betrothed!"

The eye of Ulrike grew brighter, but it was merely because a tinge of color diffused itself on her features.

"I know not for what good purpose, Herr Von Ritterstein," she said, "that these allusions are now made. You know that I have come to make a last effort to secure the peace of Meta. Berchthold spoke to me of your intention to reward the service he did your life, and I have now to say, that if in aught you can do the youth favor, the moment when it will be most acceptable, hath come—for Lottchen has been too sorely stricken to bear up long against further grief."

The hermit was reproved. He turned slowly to one of his receptacles of worldly stores, and drew forth a packet. The rattling told his companion that it was of parchment, and she waited the result with curious interest.

"I will scarce say, Ulrike," he replied, "that this deed is the price of a life that is scarce worth the gift. Early in my acquaintance with young Berchthold and Meta, I wrung their secret from them; and from that moment it hath been my greatest pleasure to devise means to secure

the happiness of one so dear to thee. I found in the child, the simple, ingenuous faith which was so admirable in the mother, and shall I say that reverence for the latter quickened the desire to serve her offspring?"

"I certainly owe thee thanks, Herr Von Ritterstein, for the constancy of this good opinion," returned Ulrike, showing sensibility.

"Thank me not, but rather deem the desire to serve thy child a tribute that repentant error gladly pays to virtue. Thou knowest that I am the last of my race, and there remained naught but to endow some religious house, to let my estate and gold pass to the feudal prince, or to do this."

"I could not have thought it easy to effect this change, in opposition to the Elector's interests!"

"Those have been looked to; a present fine has smoothed the way, and these parchments contain all that is necessary to install young Berchthold as my substitute and heir."

"Friend!—dear, generous friend!" exclaimed the mother, moved to tears, for, at that moment, Ulrike saw nothing but the future happiness of her child assured, and Berchthold restored to more than his former hopes—"generous and noble Odo!"

The hermit arose, and placed the parchment in her hand, in the manner of one long prepared to perform the act.

"And now, Ulrike," he said with a forced calm, "this solemn and imperative duty done, there remaineth but the last leave-taking."

"Leave-taking!—Thou wilt live with Meta and Berchthold,—the castle of Ritterstein will be thy resting-place, after so much sorrow and suffering!"

"This may not be—my vow—my duties—Ulrike, I fear, my prudence forbids."

"Thy prudence!—Thou art no longer young, dear Odo, privations thou hast hitherto despised will overload thy increasing years, and we shall not be happy with the knowledge that thou art suffering for the very conveniences which thine own liberality hath conferred on others."

"Habit hath taken nature's place, and the hermitage and the camp are no longer strangers to me. If thou wouldst secure not only my peace, but my salvation, Ulrike, let me depart. I have already lingered too long near a scene which is filled with recollections that prove dread enemies to the penitent."

Ulrike recoiled, and her cheek blanched to paleness. Every limb trembled, for that quick sympathy, which neither time nor duty had entirely extinguished, silently admonished her of his meaning. There was a fervor in his voice, too, that thrilled on her ear like tones which, spite of all her care, the truant imagination would sometimes recall; for, in no subsequent condition of life, can a woman entirely forget the long cherished sounds with which true love first greets the maiden ear.

"Odo," said a voice so gentle that it caused the heart of the anchorite to beat, "when dost thou think to depart?"

"This day—this hour—this minute."

"I believe—yes—thou art right to go!"

"Ulrike, God will keep thee in mind. Pray often for me."

"Farewell, dear Odo."

"God bless thee—may He have mercy on me!"

There was then a short pause. The hermit approached and lifted his hands in the attitude of benediction; twice he seemed about to clasp the unresisting Ulrike to his bosom, but her meek, tearful countenance repressed the act, and, muttering a prayer, he rushed from the hut. Left to herself, Ulrike sank on a stool, and remained like an image of woe, tears flowing in streams down her cheeks.

Some minutes elapsed before the wife of Heinrich Frey was aroused from her forgetfulness. Then the approach of footsteps told her that she was no longer alone. For the first time in her life, Ulrike endeavored to conceal her emotion with a sentiment of shame; but ere this could be effected, the Count and Heinrich entered.

"What hast done with poor Odo Von Ritterstein, good Frau; that man of sin and sorrow?" demanded the latter, in his hearty, unsuspecting manner.

"He has left us, Heinrich."

"For his castle!—well, the man hath had his share of sorrow, and ease may not yet come too late. The life of Odo, Lord Count, hath not been, like our own histories, of a nature to make him content. Had that affair of the Host, though at the best but an irreverent and unwarrantable act, happened in these days, less might have been thought of it; and then, (tapping his wife's cheek) to lose Ulrike's favor was no slight calamity of itself.—But what have we here?"

"'Tis a deed, by which the Herr Von Ritterstein invests Berchthold with his worldly effects."

The Burgomaster hastily unfolded the ample parchment. At a glance, though unable to comprehend the Latin of the instrument, his accustomed eye saw that all the usual appliances were there. Turning suddenly to Emich, for he was not slow to comprehend the cause of the gift, he exclaimed—

"Here is manna in the wilderness! Our differences are all happily settled, nobly-born Count, and next to according the hand of Meta to the owner of the lands of Ritterstein, I hold it a pleasure to oblige an illustrious friend and patron. Henceforth, Herr Emich, let there be nought but fair words between us."

Since entering the hut, the Count had not spoken. His look had studied the tearful eyes, and colorless cheeks of Ulrike, and he put his own constructions on the scene. Still he did the fair wife of the burgher justice, for, though less credulous than Heinrich on the subject of his consort's affections, he too well knew the spotless character of her mind, to change the opinion her virtue had extorted from him, in early youth. He accepted the conditions of his friend, with as much apparent frankness as they were offered, and, after a few short explanations, the whole party left the Heidenmauer together.

Our task is ended. On the following day Berchthold and Meta were united. The Castle and the Town vied with each other in doing honor to the nuptials, and Ulrike and Lottchen endeavored to forget their own permanent causes of sorrow in the happiness of their children.

In due time Berchthold took possession of his lands, removing with his bride and mother to the Castle of Ritterstein, which he always affected to hold merely as the trustee of its absent owner. Gottlob was promoted in his service, and having succeeded in persuading Gisela to forget the gay cavalier who had frequented Hartenburg, these two wayward spirits settled down into a half-loving, half-wrangling couple, for the rest of their lives.

Duerckheim, as is commonly the case with the secondary actors in most great changes, shared the fate of the frogs in the fable; it got rid of the Benedictines for a new master, and though the Burgomaster and Dietrich, in after-life, had many wise discourses concerning the nature of the revolution of Limburg, as the first affected to call

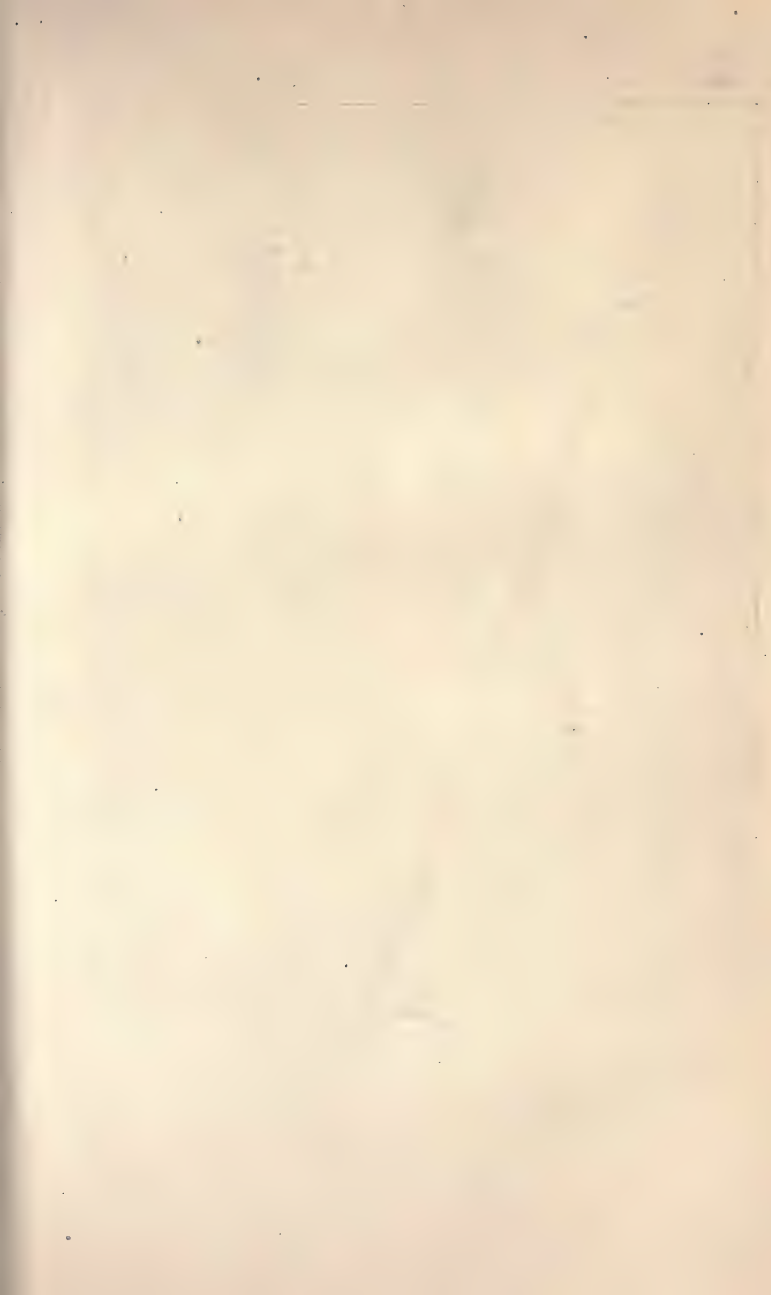
the destruction of the Abbey, he never could very clearly explain to the understanding of the latter, the great principles of its merits. Still the smith was not the less an admirer of the Count, and to this day his descendants show the figure of a marble cherub, as a trophy brought away by their ancestor on that occasion.

Bonifacius and his monks found shelter in other convents, each endeavoring to lessen the blow, by such expedients as best suited his tastes and character. The pious Arnolph persevered to the end, and, believing charity to be the fairest attribute of the Christian, he never ceased to pray for the enemies of the Church, or to toil that they might have the benefit of his intercession.

As for Odo Von Ritterstein, the country was long moved by different tales of his fate. One rumor—and it had much currency—said he was serving in company with Albrecht of Viederbach, who rejoined his brother knights, and that he died on the sands of Africa. But there is another tradition extant in the Jaegethal, touching his end. It is said, that, thirty years later, after Heinrich, and Emich of Leiningen, and most of the other actors of this legend, had been called to their great accounts, an aged wanderer came to the gate of Ritterstein, demanding shelter for the night. He is reported to have been well received by Meta, her husband and son being then absent in the wars, and to have greatly interested his hostess by the histories he gave of customs and events in distant regions. Pleased with her guest, the Madame Von Ritterstein (for Berchthold had purchased this appellation by his courage) urged him to rest himself another day within her walls. From communicating, the stranger began to inquire; and he so knew how to put his questions, that he soon obtained the history of the family. Ulrike was the last he named; and the younger female inmates of the castle fancied that his manner changed as he listened to the account of the close of her life, and of her peaceful and pious end. The stranger departed that very day, nor would his visit probably have been remembered, had not his body been shortly after found in the hut of the Heidenmauer, stiffened by death. Those who love to throw a coloring of romance over the affections, are fond of believing this was the hermit, who had found a secret satisfaction, even at the close of so long a life, in breathing his last on the spot where he had finally separated from the woman he had so long and fruitlessly loved.

To this tradition—true or false—we attach no importance. Our object has been to show, by a rapidly-traced picture of life, the reluctant manner in which the mind of man abandons old, to receive new impressions—the inconsistencies between profession and practice—the error in confounding the good with the bad, in any sect or persuasion—the common and governing principles that control the selfish, under every shade and degree of existence—and the high and immutable qualities of the good, the virtuous and of the really noble.

THE END.





“As Sigismund uttered this communication so terrible to the ear of the listener, he arose and fled from the room.”—*The Headsman*, page 148.

THE HEADSMAN

OR

THE ABBAYE DES VIGNERONS

A TALE

BY

J. FENIMORE COOPER

"How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
Makes deeds ill done!"

INTRODUCTION.

EARLY in October, 1832, a travelling-carriage stopped on the summit of that long descent where the road pitches from the elevated plain of Moudon, in Switzerland, to the level of the lake of Geneva, immediately above the little city of Vévey. The postilion had dismounted to chain a wheel, and the halt enabled those he conducted to catch a glimpse of the lovely scenery of that remarkable view.

The travellers were an American family, which had long been wandering about Europe, and which was now destined it knew not whither, having just traversed a thousand miles of Germany in its devious course. Four years before, the same family had halted on the same spot, nearly on the same day of the month of October, and for precisely the same object. It was then journeying to Italy, and as its members hung over the view of the Léman, with its accessories of Chillon, Châtelard, Blonay, Meillerie, the peaks of Savoy, and the wild ranges of the Alps, they had felt regret that the fairy scene was so soon to pass away. The case was now different, and yielding to the charm of a nature so noble, and yet so soft, within a few hours the carriage was in remise, a house was taken, the baggage unpacked, and the household gods of the travellers were erected, for the twentieth time, in a strange land.

Our American (for the family had its head) was familiar with the ocean, and the sight of water awoke old and pleasant recollections. He was hardly established in Vévey as a housekeeper, before he sought a boat. Chance brought him to a certain Jean Descloux (we give the spelling at hazard), with whom he soon struck up a bargain, and they launched forth in company upon the lake.

This casual meeting was the commencement of an agreeable and friendly intercourse. Jean Descloux, besides being a very good boatman, was a respectable philosopher in

his way ; possessing a tolerable stock of general information. His knowledge of America, in particular, might be deemed a little remarkable. He knew it was a continent, which lay west of his own quarter of the world ; that it had a place in it called New Vévey ; that all the whites who had gone there were not yet black, and that there were plausible hopes it might one day be civilized. Finding Jean so enlightened on a subject under which most of the eastern savants break down, the American thought it well enough to prick him closely on other matters. The worthy boatman turned out to be a man of singularly just discrimination. He was a reasonably good judge of the weather ; had divers marvels to relate concerning the doings of the lake ; thought the city very wrong for not making a port in the great square ; always maintained that the wine of Saint Saphorin was very savory drinking for those who could get no better ; laughed at the idea of there being sufficient cordage in the world to reach to the bottom of the Genfer See ; was of opinion that the trout was a better fish than the féra ; spoke with singular moderation of his ancient masters, the bourgeoisie of Berne, which, however, he always affirmed kept singularly bad roads in Vaud, while those around its own city were the best in Europe, and otherwise showed himself to be a discreet and observant man. In short, honest Jean Descloux was a fair sample of that home-bred, upright common sense, which seems to form the instinct of the mass, and which it is greatly the fashion to deride in those circles in which mystification passes for profound thinking, bold assumption for evidence, a simper for wit, particular personal advantages for liberty, and in which it is deemed a mortal offence against good manners to hint that Adam and Eve were the common parents of mankind.

"Monsieur has chosen a good time to visit Vévey," observed Jean Descloux, one evening that they were drifting in front of the town, the whole scenery resembling a fairy picture rather than a portion of this much-abused earth ; "it blows sometimes at this end of the lake in a way to frighten the gulls out of it. We shall see no more of the steamboat after the last of the month."

The American cast a glance at the mountain, drew upon his memory for sundry squalls and gales which he had seen himself, and thought the boatman's figure of speech less extravagant than it had at first seemed.

"If your lake craft were better constructed, they would make better weather," he quietly observed.

Monsieur Descloux had no wish to quarrel with a customer who employed him every evening, and who preferred floating with the current to being rowed with a crooked oar. He manifested his prudence, therefore, by making a reserved reply.

"No doubt, monsieur," he said, "that the people who live on the sea make better vessels, and know how to sail them more skilfully. We had a proof of that here at Vévey" (he pronounced the word like *v-vaïs*, agreeably to the sounds of the French vowels), "last summer, which you might like to hear. An English gentleman—they say he was a captain in the marine—had a vessel built at Nice, and dragged over the mountains to our lake. He took a run across to Meillerie one fine morning, and no duck ever skimmed along lighter or swifter! He was not a man to take advice from a Swiss boatman, for he had crossed the line and seen waterspouts and whales! Well, he was on his way back in the dark, and it came on to blow here from off the mountains, and he stood on boldly toward our shore, heaving the lead as he drew near the land, as if he had been beating into Spithead in a fog,"—Jean chuckled at the idea of sounding in the Léman—"while he flew along like a bold mariner, as no doubt he was!"

"Landing, I suppose," said the American, "among the lumber in the great square?"

"Monsieur is mistaken. He broke his boat's nose against that wall; and the next day, a piece of her, big enough to make a thole-pin, was not to be found. He might as well have sounded the heavens!"

"The lake has a bottom, notwithstanding?"

"Your pardon, monsieur. The lake has no bottom. The sea may have a bottom, but we have no bottom here." There was little use in disputing the point.

Monsieur Descloux then spoke of the revolutions he had seen. He remembered the time when Vaud was a province of Berne. His observations on this subject were rational, and were well seasoned with common sense. His doctrine was simply this: "If one man rule, he will rule for his own benefit and that of his parasites; if a minority rule, we have many masters instead of one" (honest Jean had got hold here of a cant saying of the privileged, which he very ingeniously converted against themselves), "all of

whom must be fed and served ; and if the majority rule, and rule wrongfully, why, the minimum of harm is done." He admitted that the people might be deceived to their own injury, but then he did not think it was quite as likely to happen, as that they should be oppressed when they were governed without any agency of their own. On these points the American and the Vaudois were absolutely of the same mind.

From politics the transition to poetry was natural, for a common ingredient in both would seem to be fiction. On the subject of his mountains, Monsieur Descloux was a thorough Swiss. He expatiated on their grandeur, their storms, their height, and their glaciers, with eloquence. The worthy boatman had some such opinions of the superiority of his own country as all are apt to form who have never seen any other. He dwelt on the glories of an Abbaye des Vignerons, too, with the gusto of a Vévaïsan, and seemed to think it would be a high stroke of state policy, to get up a new *fête* of this kind as speedily as possible. In short, the world and its interests were pretty generally discussed between these two philosophers during an intercourse that extended to a month.

Our American was not a man to let instruction of this nature easily escape him. He lay hours at a time on the seats of Jean Descloux's boat, looking up at the mountains, or watching some lazy sail on the lake, and speculating on the wisdom of which he was so accidentally made the repository. His view on one side was limited by the glacier of Mount Vélan, a near neighbor of the celebrated col of St. Bernard ; and on the other, his eye could range to the smiling fields that surround Geneva. Within this setting is contained one of the most magnificent pictures that Nature ever drew, and he bethought him of the human actions, passions, and interests, of which it might have been the scene. By a connection that was natural enough to the situation, he imagined a fragment of life passed between these grand limits, and the manner in which men could listen to the never-wearied promptings of their impulses in the immediate presence of the majesty of the Creator. He bethought him of the analogies that exist between inanimate nature and our own wayward inequalities ; of the fearful admixture of good and evil of which we are composed ; of the manner in which the best betray their submission to the devils, and in which the worst have

gleams of that eternal principle of right, by which they have been endowed by God ; of those tempests which sometimes lie dormant in our systems, like the slumbering lake in the calm, but which excited, equal its fury when lashed by the winds ; of the strength of prejudices ; of the worthlessness and changeable character of the most cherished of our opinions, and of that strange, incomprehensible, and yet winning *mélange* of contradictions, of fallacies, of truths, and of wrongs, which make up the sum of our existence.

The following pages are the result of this dreaming. The reader is left to his own intelligence for the moral.

A respectable English writer observed : " All pages of human life are worth reading ; the wise instruct ; the gay divert us ; the imprudent teach us what to shun ; the absurd cure the spleen."



THE HEADSMAN;

OR, THE ABBAYE DES VIGNERONS.

CHAPTER I.

“ Day glimmered and I went, a gentle breeze
Ruffling the Leman lake.”—ROGERS.

THE year was in its fall, according to a poetical expression of our own, and the morning bright, as the fairest and swiftest bark that navigated the Leman lay at the quay of the ancient and historical town of Geneva, ready to depart for the country of Vaud. This vessel was called the Winkelried, in commemoration of Arnold of that name, who had so generously sacrificed life and hopes to the good of his country, and who deservedly ranks among the truest of those heroes of whom we have well-authenticated legends. She had been launched at the commencement of the summer, and still bore at the fore-top-mast-head a bunch of evergreens, profusely ornamented with knots and streamers of ribbon, the offerings of the patron's female friends, and the fancied gage of success. The use of steam, and the presence of unemployed seamen of various nations, in this idle season of the warlike, are slowly leading to innovations and improvements in the navigation of the lakes of Italy and Switzerland, it is true; but time, even at this hour, has done little toward changing the habits and opinions of those who ply on these inland waters for a subsistence. The Winkelreid had the two low diverging masts; the attenuated and picturesquely poised latine yards; the light triangular sails; the sweeping and projecting gangways; the receding and falling stern; the high and peaked prow, with, in general, the classical and

quaint air of those vessels that are seen in the older paintings and engravings. A gilded ball glittered on the summit of each mast, for no canvas was set higher than the slender and well-balanced yards, and it was above one of these that the wilted bush, with its gay appendages, trembled and fluttered in a fresh western wind. The hull was worthy of so much goodly apparel, being spacious, commodious, and, according to the wants of the navigation, of approved mould. The freight, which was sufficiently obvious, much the greatest part being piled on the ample deck, consisted of what our own watermen would term an assorted cargo. It was, however, chiefly composed of those foreign luxuries, as they were then called, though use has now rendered them nearly indispensable to domestic economy, which were consumed, in singular moderation, by the more affluent of those who dwelt deeper among the mountains, and of the two principal products of the dairy ; the latter being destined to a market in the less verdant countries of the south. To these must be added the personal effects of an unusual number of passengers, which were stowed on the top of the heavier part of the cargo, with an order and care that their value would scarcely seem to require. The arrangement, however, was necessary to the convenience, and even to the security of the bark, having been made by the patron with a view to posting each individual by his particular wallet, in a manner to prevent confusion in the crowd, and to leave the crew space and opportunity to discharge the necessary duties of the navigation.

With a vessel stowed, sails ready to drop, the wind fair, and the day drawing on apace, the patron of the Winkelried, who was also her owner, felt a very natural wish to depart. But an unlooked-for obstacle had just presented itself at the water gate, where the officer charged with the duty of looking into the characters of all who went and came was posted, and around whom some fifty representatives of half as many nations were now clustered in a clamorous throng, filling the air with a confusion of tongues that had some probable affinity to the noises which deranged the workmen of Babel. It appeared, by parts of sentences and broken remonstrances, equally addressed to the patron, whose name was Baptiste, and to the guardian of the Genevese laws, a rumor was rife among these truculent travellers, that Balthazar, the headsman, or exe-

cutioner, of the powerful and aristocratical canton of Berne, was about to be smuggled into their company by the cupidity of the former, contrary, not only to what was due to the feelings and rights of men of more creditable callings, but, as it was vehemently and plausibly insisted, to the very safety of those who were about to trust their fortunes to the vicissitudes of the elements.

Chance and the ingenuity of Baptiste had collected, on this occasion, as party-colored and heterogeneous an assemblage of human passions, interests, dialects, wishes, and opinions, as any admirer of diversity of character could desire. There were several small traders, some returning from adventures in Germany and France, and some bound southward, with their scanty stock of wares; a few poor scholars, bent on a literary pilgrimage to Rome; an artist or two, better provided with enthusiasm than with either knowledge or taste, journeying with poetical longings towards skies and tints of Italy; a *troupe* of street jugglers, who had been turning their Neapolitan buffoonery to account among the duller and less sophisticated inhabitants of Swabia; divers lackeys out of place; some six or eight capitalists who lived on their wits, and a nameless herd of that set which the French call "bad subjects;" a title that is just now, oddly enough, disputed between the dregs of society and a class that would fain become its exclusive leaders and lords.

These, with some slight qualifications that it is not yet necessary to particularize, composed that essential requisite of all fair representation—the majority. Those who remained were of a different caste. Near the noisy crowd of tossing heads and brandished arms, in and around the gate, was a party containing the venerable and still fine figure of a man in the travelling dress of one of superior condition, and who did not need the testimony of the two or three liveried menials that stood near his person, to give an assurance of his belonging to the more fortunate of his fellow creatures, as good and evil are usually estimated in calculating the chances of life. On his arm leaned a female, so young, and yet so lovely, as to cause regret in all who observed her fading color, the sweet but melancholy smile that occasionally lighted her mild and pleasing features, at some of the more marked exuberances of folly among the crowd, and a form which, notwithstanding her lessened bloom, was nearly perfect. If these symptoms of

delicate health did not prevent this fair girl from being amused at the volubility and arguments of the different orators, she oftener manifested apprehension at finding herself the companion of creatures so untrained, so violent, so exacting, and so grossly ignorant. A young man, wearing the roquelaure and other similar appendages of a Swiss in foreign military service, a character to excite neither observation nor comment in that age, stood at her elbow, answering the questions that from time to time were addressed to him by the others, in a manner to show he was an intimate acquaintance, though there were signs about his travelling equipage to prove he was not exactly of their ordinary society. Of all who were not immediately engaged in the boisterous discussion at the gate, this young soldier, who was commonly addressed by those near him as Monsieur Sigismund, was much the most interested in its progress. Though of herculean frame, and evidently of unusual physical force, he was singularly agitated. His cheek, which had not yet lost the freshness due to the mountain air, would, at times, become pale as that of the wilting flower near him ; while at others, the blood rushed across his brow in a torrent that seemed to threaten a rupture of the starting vessels in which it so tumultuously flowed. Unless addressed, however, he said nothing ; his distress gradually subsiding, until it was merely betrayed by the convulsive writhings of his fingers, which unconsciously grasped the hilt of his sword.

The uproar had now continued for some time ; throats were getting sore, tongues clammy, voices hoarse, and words incoherent, when a sudden check was given to the useless clamor by an incident quite in unison with the disturbance itself. Two enormous dogs were in attendance hard by, apparently awaiting the movements of their respective masters, who were lost to view in the mass of heads and bodies that stopped the passage of the gate. One of these animals was covered with a short, thick coating of hair, whose prevailing color was a dingy yellow, but whose throat and legs, with most of the inferior parts of the body, were of a dull white. Nature, on the other hand, had given a dusky, brownish, shaggy dress to his rival, though his general hue was relieved by a few shades of a more decided black. As respects weight and force of body, the difference between the brutes was not very obvious, though perhaps it slightly inclined in favor of

the former, who in length, if not in strength, of limb, however, had more manifestly the advantage.

It would much exceed the intelligence we have brought to this task to explain how far the instincts of the dogs sympathized in the savage passions of the human beings around them, or whether they were conscious that their masters had espoused opposite sides in the quarrel, and that it became them, as faithful esquires, to tilt together by way of supporting the honor of those they followed; but, after measuring each other for the usual period with the eye, they came violently together, body to body, in the manner of their species. The collision was fearful, and the struggle, being between two creatures of so great size and strength, of the fiercest kind. The roar resembled that of lions, effectually drowning the clamor of human voices. Every tongue was mute, and each head was turned in the direction of the combatants. The trembling girl recoiled with averted face, while the young man stepped eagerly forward to protect her, for the conflict was near the place they occupied; but powerful and active as was his frame, he hesitated about mingling in an affray so ferocious. At this critical moment, when it seemed that the furious brutes were on the point of tearing each other in pieces, the crowd was pushed violently open, and two men burst, side by side, out of the mass. One wore the black robes, the conical, Asiatic looking, tufted cap, and the white belt of an Augustine monk, and the other had the attire of a man addicted to the seas, without, however, being so decidedly maritime as to leave his character a matter that was quite beyond dispute. The former was fair, ruddy, with an oval, happy face, of which internal peace and good-will to his fellows were the principal characteristics, while the latter had the swarthy hue, bold lineaments, and glittering eye, of an Italian.

“Uberto!” said the monk reproachfully, affecting the sort of offended manner that one would be apt to show to a more intelligent creature, willing, but at the same time afraid, to trust his person nearer to the furious conflict, “shame on thee, old Uberto! Hast forgotten thy schooling—hast no respect for thine own good name?”

On the other hand, the Italian did not stop to expostulate; but throwing himself with reckless hardihood on the dogs, by dint of kicks and blows, of which much

the heaviest portion fell on the follower of Augustine, he succeeded in separating the combatants.

"Ha, Nettuno!" he exclaimed, with the severity of one accustomed to exercise a stern and absolute authority, so soon as this daring exploit was achieved, and he had recovered a little of the breath lost in the violent exertion—"what dost mean? Canst find no better amusement than quarrelling with a dog of San Bernardo! Fie upon thee, foolish Nettuno! I am ashamed of thee, dog: thou, that hast discreetly navigated so many seas, to lose thy temper on a bit of fresh water!"

The dog, which was in truth no other than a noble animal of the well-known Newfoundland breed, hung his head, and made signs of contrition, by drawing nearer to his master with a tail that swept the ground, while his late adversary quietly seated himself with a species of monastic dignity, looking from the speaker to his foe, as if endeavoring to comprehend the rebuke which his powerful and gallant antagonist took so meekly.

"Father," said the Italian, "our dogs are both too useful, in their several ways, and both of too good character to be enemies. I know Uberto of old, for the paths of St. Bernard and I are no strangers, and, if report does the animal no more than justice, he hath not been an idle cur among the snows."

"He hath been the instrument of saving seven Christians from death," answered the monk, beginning again to regard his mastiff with friendly looks, for at first there had been keen reproach and severe displeasure in his manner—"not to speak of the bodies that have been found by his activity, after the vital spark had fled."

"As for the latter, father, we can count little more in favor of the dog than a good intention. Valuing services on this scale, I might ere this have been the Holy Father himself, or at least a cardinal; but seven lives saved, for their owners to die quietly in their beds, and with opportunity to make their peace with heaven, is no bad recommendation for a dog. Nettuno, here, is every way worthy to be the friend of old Uberto, for thirteen drowning men have I myself seen him draw from the greedy jaws of sharks and other monsters of deep water. What dost thou say, father, shall we make peace between the brutes?"

The Augustine expressed his readiness, as well as his desire, to aid in an effort so laudable, and by dint of com-

mands and persuasion, the dogs, who were predisposed to peace from having had a mutual taste of the bitterness of war, and who now felt for each other the respect which courage and force are apt to create, were soon on the usual terms of animals of their kind that have no particular grounds for contention.

The guardian of the city improved the calm produced by this little incident, to regain a portion of his lost authority. Beating back the crowd with his cane, he cleared a space around the gate into which but one of the travellers could enter at a time, while he professed himself not only ready but determined to proceed with his duty, without further procrastination. Baptiste, the patron, who beheld the precious moments wasting, and who, in the delay, foresaw a loss of wind, which, to one of his pursuits, was loss of money, now earnestly pressed the travellers to comply with the necessary forms, and to take their stations in his bark with all convenient speed.

"Of what matter is it," continued the calculating waterman, who was rather conspicuously known for the love of thrift that is usually attributed to most of the inhabitants of that region, "whether there be one headsman or twenty in the bark, so long as the good vessel can float and steer? Our Lemane winds are fickle friends, and the wise take them while in the humor. Give me the breeze at west, and I will load the *Winkelried* to the water's edge with executioners, or any other pernicious creatures thou wilt, and thou mayest take the lightest bark that ever swam in the *bise*, and let us see who will first make the haven of Vévey!"

The loudest, and in a sense that is very important in all such discussions, the principal speaker in the dispute was the leader of the Neapolitan *troupe*, who, in virtue of good lungs, an agility that had no competitor in any present, and a certain mixture of superstition and bravado, that formed nearly equal ingredients in his character, was a man likely to gain great influence with those who, from their ignorance and habits, had an inherent love of the marvellous, and a profound respect for all who possessed, in acting, more audacity, and, in believing, more credulity than themselves. The vulgar like an excess, even if it be of folly; for, in their eyes, the abundance of any particular quality is very apt to be taken as the standard of its excellence.

“This is well for him who receives, but it may be death to him that pays,” cried the son of the south, gaining not a little among his auditors by the distinction, for the argument was sufficiently wily, as between the buyer and the seller. “Thou wilt get thy silver for the risk, and we may get watery graves for our weakness. Naught but mishaps can come of wicked company, and accursed will they be, in the evil hour, that are found in brotherly communion with one whose trade is hurrying Christians into eternity, before the time that has been lent by nature is fairly up. Santa Madre! I would not be the fellow-traveller of such a wretch, across this wild and changeable lake, for the honor of leaping and showing my poor powers in the presence of the Holy Father, and the whole of the learned conclave!”

This solemn declaration, which was made with suitable gesticulation, and an action of the countenance that was well adapted to prove the speaker's sincerity, produced a corresponding effect on most of the listeners, who murmured their applause in a manner sufficiently significant to convince the patron he was not about to dispose of the difficulty simply by virtue of fair words. In this dilemma, he bethought him of a plan of overcoming the scruples of all present, in which he was warmly seconded by the agent of the police, and to which, after the usual number of cavilling objections that were generated by distrust, heated blood, and the obstinacy of disputation, the other parties were finally induced to give their consent. It was agreed that the examination should no longer be delayed, but that a species of deputation from the crowd might take their stand within the gate, where all who passed would necessarily be subject to their scrutiny, and, in the event of their vigilance detecting the abhorred and proscribed Balthazar, that the patron should return his money to the headsman, and preclude him from forming one of a party that was so scrupulous of its association, and apparently with so little reason. The Neapolitan, whose name was Pippo; one of the indigent scholars, for a century since learning was rather an auxiliary than the foe of superstition; and a certain Nicklaus Wagner, a fat Bernese, who was the owner of most of the cheeses in the bark, were the chosen of the multitude on this occasion. The first owed his election to his vehemence and volubility, qualities that the ignoble vulgar are very apt to mis-

take for conviction and knowledge ; the second to his silence and a demureness of air which pass with another class for the stillness of deep water ; and the last to his substance, as a man of known wealth, an advantage which, in spite of all that alarmists predict on one side, and enthusiasts affirm on the other, will always carry greater weight with those who are less fortunate in this respect, than is either reasonable or morally healthful, provided it is not abused by arrogance or the assumption of very extravagant and oppressive privileges. As a matter of course, these deputed guardians of the common rights were first obliged to submit their own papers to the eye of the Genevese.*

The Neapolitan, than whom an archer knave, or one that had committed more petty wrongs, did not present himself that day at the water-gate, was regularly fortified by every precaution that the long experience of a vagabond could suggest, and he was permitted to pass forthwith. The poor Westphalian student presented an instrument fairly written out in a scholastic Latin, and escaped further trouble by the vanity of the unlettered agent of the police, who hastily affirmed it was a pleasure to encounter documents so perfectly in form. But the Bernese was about to take his station by the side of the other two, appearing to think inquiry in his case unnecessary. While moving through the passage in stately silence, Nicklaus Wagner was occupied in securing the strings of a well-filled purse, which he had just lightened of a small copper coin to reward the varlet of the hostelry in which he had passed the night, and who had been obliged to follow him to the port to obtain even this scanty boon ; and the Genevese was fain to believe that, in the urgency of this important concern, he had overlooked those forms which all were just then obliged to respect, on quitting the town.

"Thou hast a name and character?" observed the latter, with official brevity.

"God help thee, friend! I did not think Geneva had

* As we have so often alluded to this examination, it may be well to explain that the present system of gendarmerie and passports did not then prevail in Europe ; taking their rise nearly a century later than that in which the events of this tale had place. But Geneva was a small and exposed state, and the regulation to which there is reference here, was one of the provisions which were resorted to from time to time in order to protect those liberties and that independence, of which its citizens were so unceasingly and so wisely jealous.

been so particular with a Swiss ;—and a Swiss who is so favorably known on the Aar, and indeed over the whole of the great canton ! I am Nicklaus Wagner, a name of little account, perhaps, but which is well esteemed among men of substance, and which has a right even to the *Bürgerschaft*—Nicklaus Wagner of Berne—thou wilt scarce need more ? ”

“ Naught but proof of its truth. Thou wilt remember this is Geneva ; the laws of a small and exposed state need be particular in affairs of this nature. ”

“ I never questioned thy state being Geneva ; I only wonder thou shouldst doubt my being Nicklaus Wagner ! I can journey the darkest night that ever threw a shadow from the mountains, anywhere between the Jura and the Oberland, and none shall say my word is to be disputed. Look’ee, there is the patron, Baptiste, who will tell thee, that if he were to land the freight which is shipped in my name, his bark would float greatly the lighter. ”

All this time Nicklaus was loath to show his papers, which were quite in rule. He even held them, with a thumb and finger separating the folds, ready to be presented to his questioner. The hesitation came from a feeling of wounded vanity, which would gladly show that one of his local importance and known substance was to be exempt from the exactions required from men of smaller means. The officer, who had great practice in this species of collision with his fellow creatures, understood the character with which he had to deal, and seeing no good reason for refusing to gratify a feeling which was innocent, though sufficiently silly, he yielded to the Bernese pride.

“ Thou canst proceed, ” he said, turning the indulgence to account, with a ready knowledge of his duty ; “ and when thou gettest again among thy burghers, do us of Geneva the grace to say, we treat our allies fairly. ”

“ I thought thy question hasty ! ” exclaimed the wealthy peasant, swelling like one who gets justice though tardily. “ Now let us to this knotty affair of the headsman, ”

Taking his place with the Neapolitan and the Westphalian, Nicklaus assumed the grave air of a judge, and an austerity of manner which proved that he entered on his duty with a firm resolution to do justice.

“ Thou art well known here, pilgrim, ” observed the officer, with some severity of tone, to the next that came to the gate.

"St. Francis to speed, master, it were else wonderful! I should be so, for the seasons scarce come and go more regularly."

"There must be a sore conscience somewhere, that Rome and thou should need each other so often!"

The pilgrim, who was enveloped in a tattered coat, sprinkled with cockle-shells, who wore his beard, and was altogether a disgusting picture of human depravity, rendered still more revolting by an ill-concealed hypocrisy, laughed openly and recklessly at the remark.

"Thou art a follower of Calvin, master," he replied, "or thou would'st not have said this. My own failings give me little trouble. I am engaged by certain parishes of Germany to take upon my poor person their physical pains, and it is not easy to name another that hath done as many messages of this kind as myself, with better proofs of fidelity. If thou hast any little offering to make, thou shalt see fair papers to prove what I say;—papers that would pass at St. Peter's itself!"

The officer perceived that he had to do with one of those unequivocal hypocrites—if such a word can properly be applied to him who scarcely thought deception necessary—who then made a traffic of expiations of this nature; a pursuit that was common enough at the close of the seventeenth and in the commencement of the eighteenth century, and which has not even yet entirely disappeared from Europe. He threw the pass with unconcealed aversion toward the profligate, who, recovering his document, assumed unasked his station by the side of the three who had been selected to decide on the fitness of those who were to be allowed to embark.

"Go to!" cried the officer, as he permitted this ebullition of disgust to escape him; "thou hast well said that we are followers of Calvin. Geneva has little in common with her of the scarlet mantle, and thou wilt do well to remember this, in thy next pilgrimage, lest the beadle make acquaintance with thy back. Hold! who art thou?"

"A heretic, hopelessly damned by anticipation, if that of yonder travelling prayer-monger be the true faith;" answered one who was pressing past, with a quiet assurance that had near carried its point without incurring the risks of the usual investigation into his name and character. It was the owner of Nettuno, whose aquatic air and perfect self-possession now caused the officer to doubt whether he

had not stopped a waterman of the lake—a class privileged to come and go at will.

“Thou knowest our usages,” said the half-satisfied Genevese.

“I were a fool else! Even the ass that often travels the same path comes in time to tell its turns and windings. Art not satisfied with touching the pride of the worthy Nicklaus Wagner, by putting the well-warmed burgher to his proofs, but thou would'st e'en question me! Come hither, Nettuno; thou shalt answer for both, being a dog of discretion. We are no go-betweens of heaven and earth, thou knowest, but creatures that come part of the water and part of the land!”

The Italian spoke loud and confidently, and in the manner of one who addressed himself more to the humors of those near than to the understanding of the Genevese. He laughed, and looked about him in a manner to extract an echo from the crowd, though not one among them all could probably have given a sufficient reason why he had so readily taken part with the stranger against the authorities of the town, unless it might have been from the instinct of opposition to the law.

“Thou hast a name!” continued the half-yielding, half-doubting guardian of the port.

“Dost take me to be worse off than the bark of Baptiste, there? I have papers, too, if thou wilt that I go to the vessel in order to seek them. This dog is Nettuno, a brute from a far country, where brutes swim like fishes, and my name is Maso, though wicked-minded men call me oftener *Il Maledetto* than by any other title.”

All in the throng, who understood the signification of what the Italian said, laughed aloud, and apparently with great glee, for, to the grossly vulgar, extreme audacity has an irresistible charm. The officer felt that the merriment was against him, though he scarce knew why; and ignorant of the language in which the other had given his extraordinary appellation, he yielded to the contagion, and laughed with the others, like one who understood the joke to the bottom. The Italian profited by this advantage, nodded familiarly with a good-natured and knowing smile, and proceeded. Whistling the dog to his side, he walked leisurely to the bark, into which he was the first that entered, always preserving the deliberation and calm of a man who felt himself privileged, and safe from further

molestation. This cool audacity effected its purpose, though one long and closely hunted by the law evaded the authorities of the town, when this singular being took his seat by the little package which contained his scanty ward robe.

CHAPTER II.

“My nobiel liege ! all my request
Ys for a nobile knyghte,
Who, tho' mayhap he has done wronge,
Hee thoughte ytt styлле was righte.”—CHATTERTON.

WHILE this impudent evasion of vigilance was successfully practised by so old an offender, the trio of sentinels, with their volunteer assistant, the pilgrim, manifested the greatest anxiety to prevent the contamination of admitting the highest executioner of the law to form one of the strangely assorted company. No sooner did the Genevese permit a traveller to pass, than they commenced their private and particular examination, which was sufficiently fierce, for more than once had they threatened to turn back the trembling, ignorant applicant on mere suspicion. The cunning Baptiste lent himself to their feelings with the skill of a demagogue, affecting a zeal equal to their own, while, at the same time, he took care most to excite their suspicions where there was the smallest danger of their being rewarded with success. Through this fiery ordeal one passed after another, until most of the nameless vagabonds had been found innocent, and the throng around the gate was so far lessened as to allow a freer circulation in the thoroughfare. The opening permitted the venerable noble, who has already been presented to the reader, to advance to the gate, accompanied by the female, and closely followed by the menials. The servitor of the police saluted the stranger with deference, for his calm exterior and imposing presence were in singular contrast with the noisy declamation and rude deportment of the rabble that had preceded.

“I am Melchior de Willading, of Berne,” said the traveller, quietly offering the proofs of what he said, with the ease of one sure of his impunity; “this is my child—my only child;” the old man repeated the latter words with

melancholy emphasis ; “and these, that wear my livery, are old and faithful followers of my house. We go by the St. Bernard, to change the ruder side of our Alps for that which is more grateful to the weak—to see if there be a sun in Italy that hath warmth enough to revive this drooping flower, and to cause it once more to raise its head joyously, as until lately it did ever in its native halls.”

The officer smiled and repeated his reverences, always declining to receive the offered papers ; for the aged father indulged the overflowing of his feelings in a manner that would have awakened even duller sympathies.

“The lady has youth and a tender parent on her side,” he said ; “these are much when health fails us.”

“She is indeed too young to sink so early !” returned the father, who had apparently forgotten his immediate business, and was gazing with a tearful eye at the faded but still eminently attractive features of the young female, who rewarded his solicitude with a look of love ; “but thou hast not seen I am the man I represent myself to be.”

“It is not necessary, noble Baron ; the city knows of your presence, and I have it in especial charge to do all that may be grateful to render the passage through Geneva, of one so honored among our allies, agreeable to his recollections.”

“Thy city’s courtesy is of known repute,” said the Baron de Willading, replacing his papers in their usual envelope, and receiving the grace like one accustomed to honors of this sort :—“art thou a father ?”

“Heaven has not been niggardly of gifts of this nature ; my table feeds eleven, besides those who gave them being.”

“Eleven ! The will of God is a fearful mystery ! And this thou seest is the sole hope of my line ;—the only heir that is left to the name and lands of Willading ? Art thou at ease in thy condition ?”

“There are those in our town who are less so, with many thanks for the friendliness of the question.”

A slight color suffused the face of Adelheid de Willading, for so was the daughter of the Bernese called, and she advanced a step nearer to the officer.

“They who have so few at their own board, need think

of those who have so many," she said, dropping a piece of gold into the hand of the Genevese; then she added, in a voice scarce louder than a whisper—"If the young and innocent of thy household can offer a prayer in the behalf of a poor girl who has much need of aid, 'twill be remembered of God, and it may serve to lighten the grief of one who has the dread of being childless."

"God bless thee, lady!" said the officer, little used to deal with such spirits, and touched by the mild resignation and piety of the speaker, whose simple but winning manner moved him nearly to tears; "all of my family, old as well as young, shall bethink them of thee and thine."

Adelheid's cheek resumed its paleness, and she quietly accompanied her father, as he slowly proceeded toward the bark. A scene of this nature did not fail to shake the pertinacity of those who stood at watch near the gate. Of course they had nothing to say to any of the rank of Melchior de Willading, who went into the bark without a question. The influence of beauty and station, united to so much simple grace as that shown by the fair actor in the little incident we have just related, was much too strong for the ill-trained feelings of the Neapolitan and his companions. They not only let all the menials pass unquestioned also, but it was some little time before their vigilance resumed its former truculence. The two or three travelers that succeeded had the benefit of this fortunate change of disposition.

The next who came to the gate was the young soldier, whom the Baron de Willading had so often addressed as Monsieur Sigismund. His papers were regular, and no obstacle was offered to his departure. It may be doubted how far this young man would have been disposed to submit to these extra-official inquiries of the three deputies of the crowd, had there been a desire to urge them, for he went toward the quay with an eye that expressed any other sensation than that of amity or compliance. Respect, or a more equivocal feeling, proved his protection; for none but the pilgrim, who displayed ultra zeal in the pursuit of his object, ventured so far as to hazard even a smothered remark as he passed.

"There goes an arm and a sword that might well shorten a Christian's days," said the dissolute and shameless dealer in the Church's abuses, "and yet no one asks his name or calling!"

"Thou hadst better put the question thyself," returned the sneering Pippo, "since penitence is thy trade. For myself, I am content with whirling round at my own bidding, without taking a hint from that young giant's arm."

The poor scholar and the Burgher of Berne appeared to acquiesce in this opinion, and no more was said in the matter. In the meanwhile there was another at the gate. The new applicant had little in his exterior to renew the vigilance of the superstitious trio. A quiet, meek-looking man, seemingly of middle condition in life, and of an air altogether calm and unpretending, had submitted his passport to the faithful guardian of the city. The latter read the document, cast a quick and inquiring glance at its owner, and returned the paper in a way to show haste, and a desire to be rid of him.

"It is well," he said; "thou canst go thy way."

"How now!" cried the Neapolitan, to whom buffoonery was a congenial employment, as much by natural disposition as by practice; "how now!—have we Balthazar at last in this bloody-minded and fierce-looking traveller?" As the speaker had expected, this sally was rewarded by a general laugh, and he was accordingly encouraged to proceed. "Thou knowest our office, friend," added the unfeeling mountebank, "and must show us thy hands. None pass who bear the stain of blood!"

The traveller appeared staggered, for he was plainly a man of retired and peaceable habits, who had been thrown, by the chances of the road, in contact with one only too practised in this unfeeling species of wit. He showed his open palm, however, with a direct and confiding simplicity that drew a shout of merriment from all the bystanders.

"This will not do; soap, and ashes, and the tears of victims, may have washed out the marks of his work from Balthazar himself. The spots we seek are on the soul, man, and we must look into that, ere thou art permitted to make one in this goodly company."

"Thou didst not question yonder young soldier thus," returned the stranger, whose eye kindled, as even the meek repel unprovoked outrage, though his frame trembled violently at being subject to open insults from men so rude and unprincipled; "thou didst not dare to question yonder young soldier thus!"

"By the prayers of San Gennaro! which are known to

stop running and melted lava, I would rather thou shouldst undertake that office than I. Yonder young soldier is an honorable decapitator, and it is a pleasure to be his companion on a journey ; for, no doubt, some six or eight of the saints are speaking in his behalf daily. But he we seek is the outcast of all, good or bad, whether in heaven or on earth, or in that other hot abode to which he will surely be sent when his time shall come."

"And yet he does no more than execute the law !"

"What is law to opinion, friend ? But go thy way ; none suspect thee to be the redoubtable enemy of our heads. Go thy way, for Heaven's sake, and mutter thy prayers to be delivered from Balthazar's axe."

The countenance of the stranger worked, as if he would have answered ; then suddenly changing his purpose, he passed on, and instantly disappeared in the bark. The monk of St. Bernard came next. Both the Augustine and his dog were old acquaintances of the officer, who did not require any evidence of his character or errand from the former.

"We are the protectors of life and not its foes," observed the monk, as, leaving the more regular watchman of the place, he drew near to those whose claims to the office would have admitted of dispute ; "we live among the snows, that Christians may not die without the Church's comfort."

"Honor, holy Augustine, to thee and thy office !" said the Neapolitan, who, reckless and abandoned as he was, possessed that instinct of respect for those who deny their natures for the good of others which is common to all, however tainted by cupidity themselves. "Thou and thy dog, old Uberto, can freely pass, with our best good wishes for both."

There no longer remained any to examine, and, after a short consultation among the more superstitious of the travellers, they came to the very natural opinion that, intimidated by their just remonstrances, the offensive headsmen had shrunk, unperceived, from the crowd, and that they were at length haply relieved from his presence. The annunciation of the welcome tidings drew much self-felicitation from the different members of the motley company, and all eagerly embarked, for Baptiste now loudly and vehemently declared that a single moment of further delay was entirely out of the question.

"Of what are you thinking, men!" he exclaimed with well-acted heat; "are the Leman winds liveried lackeys, to come and go as may suit your fancies; now to blow west, and now east, as shall be most wanted, to help you on your journeys? Take example of the noble Melchior de Willading, who has long been in his place, and pray the saints, if you will, in your several fashions, that this fair western wind do not quit us in punishment of our neglect."

"Yonder come others, in haste to be of the party!" interrupted the cunning Italian; "loosen thy fasts quickly, Master Baptiste, or, by San Gennaro! we shall still be detained!"

The patron suddenly checked himself, and hurried back to the gate, in order to ascertain what he might expect from this unlooked-for turn of fortune.

Two travellers, in the attire of men familiar with the road, accompanied by a menial, and followed by a porter staggering under the burden of their luggage, were fast approaching the water gate, as if conscious the least delay might cause their being left. This party was led by one considerably past the meridian of life, and who evidently was enabled to maintain his post more by the deference of his companions than by his physical force. A cloak was thrown across one arm, while in the hand of the other he carried the rapier, which all of gentle blood then considered a necessary appendage of their rank.

"You were near losing the last bark that sails for the Abbaye des Vignerons, signori," said the Genevese, recognizing the country of the strangers at a glance, "if, as I judge from your direction and haste, these festivities are in your minds."

"Such is our aim," returned the elder of the travellers, "and, as thou sayest, we are, of a certainty, tardy. A hasty departure and bad roads have been the cause—but as happily we are yet in time to profit by this bark, wilt do us the favor to look into our authority to pass?"

The officer perused the offered document with the customary care, turning it from side to side, as if all were not right, though in a way to show that he regretted the informality.

"Signore, your pass is quite in rule as touches Savoy and the country of Nice, but it wants the city's forms."

"By San Francesco? more's the pity. We are honest

gentlemen of Genoa, hurrying to witness the revels at Vévey, of which rumor gives an enticing report, and our sole desire is to come and go peaceably. As thou seest, we are late ; for hearing at the post, on alighting, that a bark was about to spread its sails for the other extremity of the lake, we had no time to consult all the observances that thy city's rules may deem necessary. So many turn their faces the same way, to witness these ancient games, that we had not thought our quick passage through the town of sufficient importance to give thy authorities the trouble to look into our proofs."

"Therein, signore, you have judged amiss. It is my sworn duty to stay all who want the republic's permission to proceed."

"That is unfortunate, to say no more. Art thou the patron of the bark, friend?"

"And her owner, signore," answered Baptiste, who listened to the discourse with longings equal to his doubts. "I should be a great deal too happy to count such honorable travellers among my passengers."

"Thou wilt then delay thy departure until this gentleman shall see the authorities of the town, and obtain the required permission to quit it? Thy compliance shall not go unrewarded."

As the Genoese concluded, he dropped into a palm that was well practised in bribes, a sequin of the celebrated republic of which he was a citizen. Baptiste had long cultivated an aptitude to suffer himself to be influenced by gold, and it was with unfeigned reluctance that he admitted the necessity of refusing, in this instance, to profit by his own good dispositions. Still retaining the money, however, for he did not well know how to overcome his reluctance to part with it, he answered in a manner sufficiently embarrassed to show the other that he had at least gained a material advantage by his liberality.

"His Excellency knows not what he asks," said the patron, fumbling the coin between a finger and thumb ; "our Genevese citizens love to keep house till the sun is up, lest they should break their necks by walking about the uneven streets in the dark, and it will be two long hours before a single bureau will open its windows in the town. Besides, your man of the police is not like us of the lake, happy to get a morsel when the weather and occasion permit ; but he is a regular feeder, that must have his grapes

and his wine before he will use his wits for the benefit of his employers. The Winkelried would weary of doing nothing, with this fresh western breeze humming between her masts, while the poor gentleman was swearing before the town-house gate at the laziness of the officers. I know the rogues better than your Excellency, and would advise some other expedient."

Baptiste looked, with a certain expression, at the guardian of the water-gate, and in a manner to make his meaning sufficiently clear to the travellers. The latter studied the countenance of the Genevese a moment, and, better practised than the patron, or a more enlightened judge of character, he fortunately refused to commit himself by offering to purchase the officer's good-will. If there are too many who love to be tempted to forget their trusts, by a well-managed venality, there are a few who find a greater satisfaction in being thought beyond its influence. The watchman of the gate happened to be one of the latter class, and by one of the many unaccountable workings of human feeling, the very vanity which had induced him to suffer *Il Maledetto* to go through unquestioned, rather than expose his own ignorance, now led him to wish he might make some return for the stranger's good opinion of his honesty.

"Will you let me look again at the pass, signore?" said the Genevese, as if he thought a sufficient legal warranty for that which he now strongly desired to do might yet be found in the instrument itself.

The inquiry was useless, unless it was to show that the elder Genoese was called the *Signore Grimaldi*, and that his companion went by the name of *Marcelli*. Shaking his head he returned the paper in the manner of a disappointed man.

"Thou canst not have read half of what the paper contains," said Baptiste, peevishly; "your reading and writing are not such easy matters, that a squint of the eye is all-sufficient. Look at it again, and thou mayest yet find all in rule. It is unreasonable to suppose signori of their rank would journey like vagabonds, with paper to be suspected."

"Nothing is wanting but our city signatures, without which my duty will let none go by, that are truly travellers."

"This comes, signore, of the accursed art of writing,

which is much pushed and greatly abused of late. I have heard the aged waterman of the Leman praise the good old time, when boxes and bales went and came, and no ink touched paper between him that sent and him that carried; and yet it has now reached the pass that a Christian may not transport himself on his own legs without calling on the scriveners for permission."

"We lose the moment in words, when it were far better to be doing," returned the Signore Grimaldi. "The pass is luckily in the language of the country, and needs but a glance to get the approval of the authorities. Thou wilt do well to say thou canst remain the time necessary to see this little done."

"Were your Excellency to offer me the Doge's crown as a bribe, this could not be. Our Leman winds will not wait for king or noble, bishop or priest, and duty to those I have in the bark commands me to quit the port as soon as possible."

"Thou art truly well charged with living freight already," said the Genoese, regarding the deeply loaded bark with a half-distrustful eye. "I hope thou hast not overdone thy vessel's powers in receiving so many?"

"I could gladly reduce the number a little, excellent signore, for all that you see piled among the boxes and tubs are no better than so many knaves, fit only to give trouble and raise questions touching the embarkation of those who are willing to pay better than themselves. The noble Swiss whom you see seated near the stern, with his daughter and people, the worthy Melchior de Willading, gives a more liberal reward for his passage to Vévey than all those nameless rogues together."

The Genoese made a hasty movement toward the patron, with an earnestness of eye and air that betrayed a sudden and singular interest in what he heard.

"Didst thou say De Willading?" he exclaimed, eager as one of much fewer years would have been at the unexpected announcement of some pleasurable event. "Melchior, too, of that honorable name?"

"Signore, the same. None other bears the title now, for the old line they say is drawing to an end. I remember this same Baron, when he was as ready to launch his boat into a troubled lake as any in Switzerland——"

"Fortune hath truly favored me, good Marcelli!" interrupted the other, grasping the hand of his companion with

strong feeling. "Go thou to the bark, master patron, and advise thy passenger that—what shall we say to Melchior? Shall we tell him at once who waits him here, or shall we practise a little on his failing memory? By San Francesco! we will do this, Enrico, that we may try his powers! 'Twill be pleasant to see him wonder and guess—my life on it, however, that he knows me at a glance. I am truly little changed for one who hath seen so much."

The Signore Marcelli lowered his eyes respectfully at this opinion of his friend, but he did not see fit to discourage a belief which was merely a sudden ebullition, produced by the recollection of younger days. Baptiste was instantly despatched with a request that the Baron would do a stranger of rank the favor to come to the water-gate.

"Tell him 'tis a traveller disappointed in the wish to be of his company," repeated the Genoese. "That will suffice. I know him courteous, and he is not my Melchior, honest Marcelli, if he delay an instant:—thou seest! he is already quitting the bark, for never did I know him refuse an act of friendliness—dear, dear Melchior—thou art the same at seventy as thou wast at thirty!"

Here the agitation of the Genoese got the better of him, and he walked aside under a sense of shame, lest he might betray unmanly weakness. In the meantime the Baronde Willading advanced from the water-side, without suspecting that his presence was required for more than an act of simple courtesy.

"Baptiste tells me that gentlemen of Genoa are here who are desirous of hastening to the games of Vévey," said the latter, raising his beaver, "and that my presence may be of use in obtaining the pleasure of their company."

"I will not unmask until we are fairly and decently embarked, Enrico," whispered Signore Grimaldi; "nay—by the mass! not till we are fairly disembarked! The laugh against him will never be forgotten. Signore," addressing the Bernese with affected composure, endeavoring to assume the manner of a stranger, though his voice trembled with eagerness at each syllable, "we are indeed of Genoa, and most anxious to be of the party in your bark—but—he little suspects who speaks to him, Marcelli!—but, signore, there has been some small oversight touching the city signatures, and we have need of friendly assistance either

to pass the gate, or to detain the bark until the forms of the place shall have been respected."

"Signore, the city of Geneva hath need to be watchful, for it is an exposed and weak state, and I have little hope that my influence can cause this trusty watchman to dispense with his duty. Touching the bark, a small gratuity will do much with honest Baptiste, should there not be a question of the stability of the breeze, in which case he might be somewhat of a loser."

"You say the truth, noble Melchior," put in the patron, "were the wind ahead, or were it two hours earlier in the morning, the little delay should not cost the strangers a batz—that is to say, nothing unreasonable; but as it is, I have not twenty minutes more to lose, even were all the city magistrates cloaking to be of the party, in their proper and worshipful persons."

"I greatly regret, signore, it should be so," resumed the Baron, turning to the applicant with the consideration of one accustomed to season his refusals by a gracious manner; "but these watermen have their secret signs, by which it would seem they know the latest moment they may with prudence delay."

"By the mass! Marcelli, I will try him a little—I should have known him in a carnival dress. Signor Barone, we are but poor Italian gentlemen, it is true, of Genoa. You have heard of our Republic, beyond question—the poor state of Genoa?"

"Though of no great pretensions to letters, signore," answered Melchior, smiling, "I am not quite ignorant that such a state exists. You could not have named a city on the shores of your Mediterranean that would sooner warm my heart than this very town of which you speak. Many of my happiest hours were passed within its walls, and often, even at this late day, do I live over again my life to recall the pleasures of that merry period. Were there leisure I could repeat a list of honorable and much esteemed names that are familiar to your ears, in proof of what I say."

"Name them, Signor Barone;—for the love of the saints and the blessed Virgin, name them, I beseech you!"

A little amazed at the eagerness of the other, Melchior de Willading earnestly regarded his furrowed face; and, for an instant, an expression like incertitude crossed his own features.

"Nothing would be easier, signore, than to name many. The first in my memory, as he has always been the first in my love, is Gaetano Grimaldi, of whom, I doubt not, both of you have often heard?"

"We have, we have! That is—yes, I think we may say, Marcelli, that we have often heard of him, and not unfavorably. Well, what of this Grimaldi?"

"Signore, the desire to converse of your noble townsman is natural, but were I to yield to my wishes to speak of Gaetano, I fear the honest Baptiste might have reason to complain."

"To the devil with Baptiste and his bark! Melchior,—my good Melchior!—dearest, dearest Melchior! hast thou indeed forgotten me?"

Here the Genoese opened wide his arms, and stood ready to receive the embrace of his friend. The Baron de Willading was troubled, but he was still so far from suspecting the real fact, that he could not have easily told the reason why. He gazed wistfully at the working features of the fine old man who stood before him, and though memory seemed to flit around the truth, it was in gleams so transient as completely to baffle his wishes.

"Dost thou deny me, De Willading?—dost thou refuse to own the friend of thy youth—the companion of thy pleasures—the sharer of thy sorrows—thy comrade in the wars—nay, more—thy confidant in a dearer tie?"

"None but Gaetano Grimaldi himself can claim these titles!" burst from the lips of the trembling Baron.

"Am I aught else?—am I not this Gaetano?—that Gaetano—thy Gaetano,—old and very dear?"

"Thou Gaetano!" exclaimed the Bernois, recoiling a step, instead of advancing to meet the eager embrace of the Genoese, whose impetuous feelings were little cooled by time—"thou, the gallant, active, daring, blooming Grimaldi! Signore, you trifle with an old man's affections."

"By the holy mass, I do not deceive thee! Ha, Marcelli, he is slow to believe as ever, but fast and certain as the vow of a churchman when convinced. If we are to distrust each other for a few wrinkles, thou wilt find objections rising against thine own identity as well as against mine, friend Melchior. I am none other than Gaetano—the Gaetano of thy youth—the friend thou hast not seen these many long and weary years."

Recognition was slow in making its way in the mind of

the Bernese. Lineament after lineament, however, became successively known to him, and most of all, the voice served to awaken long dormant recollections. But as heavy natures are said to have the least self-command when fairly excited, so did the Baron betray the most ungovernable emotion of the two, when conviction came at last to confirm the words of his friend. He threw himself on the neck of the Genoese, and the old man wept in a manner that caused him to withdraw aside, in order to conceal the tears which had so suddenly and profusely broken from the fountains that he had long thought nearly dried.

CHAPTER III.

“Ha, cousin Silence, that thou hadst seen
That, that this knight and I have seen!”

—*King Henry IV.*

THE calculating patron of the Winkelried had patiently watched the progress of the foregoing scene with great inward satisfaction, but now that the stranger seemed to be assured of support powerful as that of Melchior de Willading, he was disposed to turn it to account without further delay. The old men were still standing with their hands grasping each other, after another warm and still closer embrace, and with tears rolling down the furrowed face of each, when Baptiste advanced to put in his raven-like remonstrance.

“Noble gentlemen,” he said, “if the felicitations of one humble as I can add to the pleasure of this happy meeting, I beg you to accept them; but the wind has no heart for friendships nor any thought for the gains or losses of us watermen. I feel it my duty, as patron of the bark, to recall to your honors that many poor travellers, far from their homes and pining families, are waiting our leisure, not to speak of foot-sore pilgrims and other worthy adventurers, who are impatient in their hearts, though respect for their superiors keeps them tongue-tied, while we are losing the best of the breeze.”

“By San Francesco! the varlet is right,” said the Genoese, hurriedly erasing the marks of his recent weakness from his cheeks. “We are forgetful of all these worthy

people, while joy at our meeting is so strong, and it is time that we thought of others. Canst thou aid me in dispensing with the city's signatures?"

The Baron de Willading paused; for well-disposed at first to assist any gentlemen who found themselves in an unpleasant embarrassment, it will be readily imagined that the case lost none of its interest, when he found that his oldest and most tried friend was the party in want of his influence. Still it was much easier to admit the force of this new and unexpected appeal, than to devise the means of success. The officer was, to use a phrase which most men seem to think supplies a substitute for reason and principle, too openly committed to render it probable he would easily yield. It was necessary, however, to make the trial, and the Baron, therefore, addressed the keeper of the water-gate more urgently than he had yet done in behalf of the strangers.

"It is beyond my functions; there is not one of our Syndics whom I would more gladly oblige than yourself, noble Baron," answered the officer; "but the duty of the watchman is to adhere strictly to the commands of those who have placed him at his post."

"Gaetano, we are not the men to complain of this! We have stood together too long in the same trench, and have too often slept soundly, in situations where failure in this doctrine might have cost us our lives, to quarrel with the honest Genevese for his watchfulness. To be frank, 'twere little use to tamper with the fidelity of a Swiss or with that of his ally."

"With the Swiss that is well paid to be vigilant!" answered the Genoese, laughing in a way to show that he had only revived one of those standing but biting jests, that they who love each other best are, perhaps, most accustomed to practise.

The Baron de Willading took the facetiousness of his friend in good part, returning the mirth of the other in a manner to show that the allusion recalled days when their hours had idly passed in the indulgence of spontaneous outbreakings of animal spirits.

"Were this thy Italy, Gaetano, a sequin would not only supply the place of a dozen signatures, but, by the name of thy favorite, San Francesco, it would give the honest gate-keeper that gift of second-sight, on which the Scottish seers are said to pride themselves."

"Well, the two sides of the Alps will keep their characters, even though we quarrel about their virtues—but we shall never see again the days that we have known! Neither the games of Vévey, nor the use of old jokes, will make us the youths we have been, dear De Willading!"

"Signore, a million of pardons," interrupted Baptiste, "but this western wind is more inconstant even than the spirits of the young."

"The rogue is again right, and we forget yonder cargo of honest travellers, who are wishing us both in Abraham's bosom, for keeping the impatient bark in idleness at the quay. Good Marcelli, hast thou aught to suggest in this strait?"

"Signore, you forget that we have another document that may be found sufficient"—the person questioned, who appeared to fill a middle station between that of a servant and that of a companion, rather hinted than observed:

"Thou sayest true—and yet I would gladly avoid producing it—but anything is better than the loss of thy company, Melchior."

"Name it not! We shall not separate, though the Winkelried rot where she lies. 'Twere easier to separate our faithful cantons than two such friends."

"Nay, noble Baron, you forget the wearied pilgrims and the many anxious travellers in the bark."

"If twenty crowns will purchase thy consent, honest Baptiste, we will have no further discussion."

"It is scarce in human will to withstand you, noble sir! Well, the pilgrims have weary feet, and rest will only fit them the better for the passage of the mountains; and as for the others, why, let them quit the bark, if they dislike the conditions. I am not a man to force my commerce on any."

"Nay, nay, I will have none of this. Keep thy gold, Melchior, and let the honest Baptiste keep his passengers, to say nothing of his conscience."

"I beseech your Excellency," interrupted Baptiste, "not to distress yourself in tenderness for me. I am ready to do far more disagreeable things to oblige so noble a gentleman."

"I will none of it! Signor officer, wilt thou do me the favor to cast a glance at this?"

As the Genoese concluded, he placed in the hands of the

watchman at the gate, a paper different from that which he had first shown. The officer perused the new instrument with deep attention, and, when half through its contents, his eyes left the page to become riveted in respectful attention on the face of the expectant Italian. He then read the passport to the end. Raising his cap ceremoniously, the keeper of the gate left the passage free, bowing with deep deference to the strangers.

"Had I sooner known this," he said, "there would have been no delay. I hope your Excellency will consider my ignorance——"

"Name it not, friend. Thou hast done well ; in proof of which I beg thy acceptance of a small token of esteem."

The Genoese dropped a sequin into the hand of the officer, passing him, at the same time, on his way to the water-side. As the reluctance of the other to receive gold came rather from a love of duty than from any particular aversion to the metal itself, this second offering met with a more favorable reception than the first. The Baron de Willading was not without surprise at the sudden success of his friend, though he was far too prudent and well bred to let his wonder be seen.

Every obstacle to the departure of the Winkelried was now removed, and Baptiste and his crew were soon actively engaged in loosening the sails and in casting off the fasts. The movement of the bark was at first slow and heavy, for the wind was intercepted by the buildings of the town ; but, as she receded from the shore, the canvas began to flap and belly, and ere long it filled outward with a report like that of a musket ; after which the motion of the travellers began to bear some relation to their nearly exhausted patience.

Soon after the party which had been so long detained at the water-gate were embarked, Adelheid first learned the reason of the delay. She had long known, from the mouth of her father, the name and early history of the Signor Grimaldi, a Genoese of illustrious family, who had been the sworn friend and comrade of Melchoir de Willading, when the latter pursued his career in arms in the wars of Italy. These circumstances having passed long before her own birth, and even before the marriage of her parents, and she being the youngest and the only survivor of a numerous family of children, they were, as respected herself, events that already began to assume the hue of history

She received the old man frankly, and even with affection, though in his yielding but still fine form, she had quite as much difficulty as her father in recognizing the young, gay, gallant, brilliant, and handsome Gaetano Grimaldi that her imagination had conceived from the verbal descriptions she had so often heard, and from her fancy was still wont to draw as he was painted in the affectionate descriptions of her father. When he suddenly and affectionately offered a kiss, the color flushed her face, for no man but he to whom she owed her being had ever before taken that liberty; but, after an instant of virgin embarrassment, she laughed, and blushing presented her cheek to receive the salute.

"The last tidings I had of thee, Melchior," said the Italian, "was the letter sent by the Swiss Ambassador, who took our city in his way as he travelled south, and which was written on the occasion of the birth of this very girl."

"Not of this, dear friend, but of an elder sister, who is long since a cherub in heaven. Thou seest the ninth precious gift that God bestowed, and thou seest all that is now left of His bounty."

The countenance of the Signor Grimaldi lost its joyousness, and a deep pause in the discourse succeeded. They lived in an age when communications between friends that were separated by distance, and by the frontiers of different States, were rare and uncertain. The fresh and novel affections of marriage had first broken an intercourse that was continued, under such disadvantages as marked the period, long after their duties called them different ways, and time, with its changes and the embarrassments of wars, had finally destroyed nearly every link in the chain of their correspondence. Each had, therefore, much of a near and interesting character to communicate to the other, and each dreaded to speak, lest he might cause some wound, that was not perfectly healed, to bleed anew. The volume of matter conveyed in the few words uttered by the Baron de Willading, showed both in how many ways they might inflict pain without intention, and how necessary it was to be guarded in their discourse during the first days of their renewed intercourse.

"This girl at least is a treasure of itself, of which I must envy thee the possession," the Signor Grimaldi at length rejoined.

The Swiss made one of those quick movements which betray surprise, and it was very apparent, that, just at the moment, he was more affected by some interest of his friend than by the apprehensions which usually beset him when any very direct allusion was made to his surviving child.

"Gaetano, thou hast a son?"

"He is lost—hopelessly—irretrievably lost—at least, to me!"

These were brief but painful glimpses into each other's concerns, and another melancholy and embarrassed pause followed. As the Baron de Willading witnessed the sorrow that deeply shadowed the face of the Genoese, he almost felt that Providence, in summoning his own boys to early graves, might have spared him the still bitter grief of mourning over the unworthiness of a living son.

"These are God's decrees, Melchior," the Italian continued of his own accord, "and we, as soldiers, as men, and more than either, as Christians, should know how to submit. The letter, of which I spoke, contained the last direct tidings that I received of thy welfare, though different travellers have mentioned thee as among the honored and trusted of thy country, without descending to the particulars of thy private life."

"The retirement of our mountains, and the little intercourse of strangers with the Swiss, have denied me even this meagre satisfaction as respects thee and thy fortunes. Since the especial courier sent according to our ancient agreement, to announce——"

The Baron hesitated, for he felt he was again touching on forbidden ground.

"To announce the birth of my unhappy boy," continued the Signor Grimaldi, firmly.

"To announce that much wished-for event, I have not had news of thee, except in a way so vague, as to whet the desire to know more rather than to appease the longings of love."

"These doubts are the penalties that friendship pays to separation. We enlist the affections in youth with the recklessness of hope, and, when called different ways by duties or interest, we first begin to perceive that the world is not the heaven we thought it, but that each enjoyment has its price, as each grief has its solace. Thou hast carried arms since we were soldiers in company?"

"As a Swiss only."

The answer drew a gleam of habitual humor from the keen eye of the Italian, whose countenance was apt to change as rapidly as his thoughts.

"In what service?"

"Nay, a truce to thy old pleasantries, good Grimaldi—and yet I should scarce love thee as I do, wert thou other than thou art! I believe we come at last to prize even the foibles of those we truly esteem!"

"It must be so, young lady, or boyish follies would long since have weaned thy father from me. I have never spared him on the subject of snows and money, and yet he beareth with me marvellously. Well, strong love endureth much. Hath the Baron often spoken to thee of old Grimaldi—young Grimaldi, I should say—and of the many freaks of our thoughtless days?"

"So much, signore," returned Adelheid, who had wept and smiled by turns during the interrupted dialogue of her father and his friend, "that I can repeat most of your youthful histories. The Castle of Willading is deep among the mountains, and it is rare indeed for the foot of stranger to enter its gates. During the long evenings of our severe winters, I have listened as a daughter would be apt to listen to the recital of most of your common adventures, and in listening, I have not only learned to know, but to esteem, one that is justly so dear to my parent."

"I make no doubt now, thou hast the history of the plunge into the canal, by over-stooping to see the Venetian beauty, at thy fingers' ends?"

"I do remember some such act of humid gallantry," returned Adelheid, laughing.

"Did thy father tell thee, child, of the manner in which he bore me off in a noble rescue from a deadly charge of the Imperial cavalry?"

"I have heard some slight allusion to such an event, too," returned Adelheid, evidently trying to recall the history of the affair to her mind, "but——"

"Light does he call it, and of small account? I wish never to see another as heavy! This is the impartiality of thy narratives, good Melchior, in which a life preserved, wounds received, and a charge to make the German quail, are set down as matters to be touched with a light hand!"

"If I did thee this service, it was more than deserved by the manner in which, before Milan——"

"Well, let it all pass together. We are old fools, young lady, and should we get garrulous in each other's praise, thou mightest mistake us for braggarts; a character that, in truth, neither wholly merits. Didst thou ever tell the girl, Melchior, of our mad excursion into the forests of the Apennines, in search of a Spanish lady that had fallen into the hands of banditti; and how we passed weeks on a foolish enterprise of errantry, that had become useless by the timely application of a few sequins on the part of the husband, even before we started on the chivalrous, not to say silly, excursion?"

"Say chivalrous, but not silly," answered Adelheid, with the simplicity of a young and sincere mind. "Of this adventure I have heard, but to me it has never seemed ridiculous. A generous motive might well excuse an undertaking of less favorable auspices."

"'Tis fortunate," returned the Signor Grimaldi, thoughtfully, "that, if youth and exaggerated opinions lead us to commit mad pranks under the name of spirit and generosity, there are other youthful and generous minds to reflect our sentiments and to smile upon our folly."

"This is more like the wary gray-headed expounder of wisdom than like the hot-headed Gaetano Grimaldi of old!" exclaimed the Baron, though he laughed while uttering the words, as if he felt at least a portion of the other's indifference to those exaggerated feelings that had entered much into the characters of both in youth. "The time has been when the words policy and calculation would have cost a companion thy favor!"

"'Tis said that the prodigal of twenty makes the miser of seventy. It is certain that even our southern sun does not warm the blood of three-score as suddenly as it heats that of one. But we will not darken thy daughter's views of the future by a picture too faithfully drawn, lest she become wise before her time. I have often questioned, Melchior, which is the most precious gift of nature—a warm fancy, or the colder powers of reason. But if I must say which I most love, the point becomes less difficult of decision. I would prefer each in its season, or rather the two united, with a gradual change in their influence. Let the youth commence with the first in the ascendant, and close with the last. He who begins life too cold a reasoner may end it a calculating egotist; and he who is ruled solely by his imagination is in danger of

having his mind so ripened as to bring forth the fruits of a visionary. Had it pleased Heaven to have left me the dear son I possessed for so short a period, I would rather have seen him leaning to the side of exaggeration in his estimate of men before experience came to chill his hopes, than to see him scan his fellows with a too philosophical eye in boyhood. 'Tis said we are but clay at the best ; but the ground, before it has been well tilled, sends forth the plants that are most congenial to its soil, and though it be of no great value, give me the spontaneous and generous growth of the weed, which proves the depth of the loam, rather than a stinted imitation of that which cultivation may, no doubt, render more useful if not more grateful."

The allusion to his lost son caused another cloud to pass athwart the brow of the Genoese.

"Thou seest, Adelheid," he continued, after a pause—"for Adelheid will I call thee, in virtue of a second father's rights—that we are making our folly respectable, at least to ourselves—Master Patron, thou hast a well-charged bark !"

"Thanks to your two honors," answered Baptiste, who stood at the helm, near the group of principal passengers. "These windfalls come rarely to the poor, and we must make much of such as offer. The games at Vévey have called every craft on the Leman to the upper end of the lake, and a little mother wit led me to trust to the last turn of the wheel, which, as you see, signore, has not come up a blank."

"Have many strangers passed by your city on their way to these sports ?"

"Many hundreds, noble gentleman ; and report speaks of thousands that are collecting at Vévey and in the neighboring villages. The country of Vaud has not had a richer harvest from her games this many a year."

"It is fortunate, Melchior, that the desire to witness these revels should have arisen in us at the same moment. The hope of at last obtaining certain tidings of thy welfare was the chief inducement that caused me to steal from Genoa, whither I am compelled to return forthwith. There is truly something providential in this meeting !"

"I so esteem it," returned the Baron de Willading ; "though the hope of soon embracing thee was strongly alive in me. Thou art mistaken in fancying that curiosity

or a wish to mingle with the multitude at Vévey has drawn me from my castle. Italy was in my eye, as it has long been in my heart."

"How!—Italy?"

"Nothing less. This fragile plant of the mountains has drooped of late in her native air, and skilful advisers have counselled the sunny side of the Alps as a shelter to revive her animation. I have promised Roger de Blonay to pass a night or two within his ancient walls, and then we are destined to seek the hospitality of the monks of St. Bernard. Like thee, I had hoped this unusual sortie from my hold might lead to intelligence touching the fortunes of one I have never ceased to love."

The Signor Grimaldi turned a more scrutinizing look toward the face of their female companion. Her gentle and winning beauty gave him pleasure; but, with his attention quickened by what had just fallen from her father, he traced, in silent pain, the signs of that early fading which threatened to include this last hope of his friend in the common fate of the family. Disease had not, however, set its seal on the sweet face of Adelheid in a manner to attract the notice of a common observer. The lessening of the bloom, the mournful character of a dove-like eye, and a look of thoughtfulness on a brow that he had ever known devoid of care and open as day with youthful ingenuousness, were the symptoms that first gave the alarm to her father, whose previous losses, and whose solitariness, as respects the ties of the world, had rendered him keenly alive to impressions of such a nature. The reflections excited by this examination brought painful recollections to all, and it was long before the discourse was renewed.

In the meantime, the *Winkelried* was not idle. As the vessel receded from the cover of the buildings and the hills, the force of the breeze was felt, and her speed became quickened in proportion; though the watermen of her crew often studied the manner in which she dragged her way through the element with a shake of the head, that was intended to express their consciousness that too much had been required of the craft. The cupidity of Baptiste had indeed charged his good bark to the uttermost. The water was nearly on a line with the low stern, and when the bark had reached a part of the lake where the waves were rolling with some force, it was found that the vast

weight was too much to be lifted by the feeble and broken efforts of these miniature seas. The consequences were, however, more vexatious than alarming. A few wet feet among the less quiet of the passengers, with an occasional slapping of a sheet of water against the gangways, and a consequent drift of spray across the pile of human heads in the centre of the bark, were all the immediate personal inconveniences. Still unjustifiable greediness of gain had tempted the patron to commit the unseaman-like fault of overloading his vessel. The decrease of speed was another and a graver consequence of his cupidity, since it might prevent their arrival in port before the breeze had expended itself.

The lake of Geneva lies nearly in the form of a crescent, stretching from the southwest toward the northeast. Its northern, or the Swiss shore, is chiefly what is called, in the language of the country, a *côte*, or a declivity that admits of cultivation ; and, with few exceptions, it has been, since the earliest periods of history, planted with the generous vine. Here the Romans had many stations and posts, vestiges of which are still visible. The confusion and the mixture of interests that succeeded the fall of the empire, gave rise in the middle ages to various baronial castles, ecclesiastical towns, and towers of defence, which still stand on the margin of this beautiful sheet of water, or ornament the eminences a little inland. At the time of which we write, the whole coast of the Lemán, if so imposing a word may be applied to the shores of so small a body of water, was in the possession of the three several states of Geneva, Savoy, and Berne. The first consisted of a mere fragment of territory at the western, or lower horn of the crescent ; the second occupied nearly the whole of the southern side of the sheet, or the cavity of the half moon ; while the latter was mistress of the whole of the convex border, and of the eastern horn. The shores of Savoy are composed, with immaterial exceptions, of advanced spurs of the high Alps, among which towers Mont Blanc, like a sovereign seated in majesty in the midst of a brilliant court, the rocks frequently rising from the water's edge in perpendicular masses. None of the lakes of this remarkable region possess a greater variety of scenery than that of Geneva, which changes from the smiling aspect of fertility and cultivation, at its lower extremity, to the sublimity of a savage and sublime nature at its upper. Vévey,

the haven for which the Winkelried was bound, lies at the distance of three leagues from the head of the lake, or the point where it receives the Rhone ; and Geneva, the port from which the reader has just seen her take her departure, is divided by that river as it glances out of the blue basin of the Lemman again, to traverse the fertile fields of France, on its hurried course toward the distant Mediterranean.

It is well known that the currents of air, on all bodies of water that lie amid high and broken mountains, are uncertain both as to their direction and their force. This was the difficulty which had most disturbed Baptiste during the delay of the bark, for the experienced waterman well knew it required the first and the freest effort of the wind to "drive the breeze home," as it is called by seamen, against the opposing currents that frequently descend from the mountains which surrounded his port. In addition to this difficulty, the shape of the lake was another reason why the winds rarely blow in the same direction over the whole of its surface at the same time. Strong and continued gales commonly force themselves down into the deep basin, and push their way against all resistance, into every crevice of the rocks ; but a power less than this, rarely succeeds in favoring the bark with the same breeze from the entrance to the outlet of the Rhone.

As a consequence of these peculiarities, the passengers of the Winkelried had early evidence that they had trifled too long with the fickle air. The breeze carried them up abreast of Lausanne in good season, but here the influence of the mountains began to impair its force, and by the time the sun had a little fallen toward the long, dark, even line of the Jura, the good vessel was driven to the usual expedients of jibbing and hauling-in of sheets.

Baptiste had only to blame his own cupidity for this disappointment ; and the consciousness that, had he complied with the engagement, made on the previous evening with the mass of the passengers, to depart with the dawn, he should now have been in a situation to profit by any turn of fortune that was likely to arise from the multitude of strangers who were in Vévey, rendered him moody. As is usual with the headstrong and the selfish when they possess the power, others were made to pay for the fault that he alone committed. His men were vexed with contradictory and useless orders ; the inferior passengers were

accused of constant neglect of his instructions, a fault which he did not hesitate to affirm had caused the bark to sail less swiftly than usual, and he no longer even answered the occasional questions of those for whom he felt habitual deference, with his former respect and readiness.

CHAPTER IV.

“Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.”—*Macbeth*.

BAFFLING and light airs kept the Winkelried a long time nearly stationary, and it was only by paying the greatest attention to trimming the sails and to all the little minutiae of the waterman's art, that the vessel was worked into the eastern horn of the crescent, as the sun touched the hazy line of the Jura. Here the wind failed entirely, the surface of the lake becoming as glassy and smooth as a mirror, and further motion, for the time at least, was quite out of the question. The crew, perceiving the hopelessness of their exertions, and fatigued with the previous toil, threw themselves among the boxes and bales, and endeavored to catch a little sleep, in anticipation of the north breeze, which, at this season of the year, usually blew from the shores of Vaud within an hour or two of the disappearance of the sun.

The deck of the bark was now left to the undisputed possession of her passengers. The day had latterly been sultry for the season, the even water having cast back the hot rays in fierce reflection, and, as evening drew on, a refreshing coolness came to relieve the densely packed and scorching travellers. The effect of such a change was like that which would have been observed among a flock of heavily fleeced sheep, which, after gasping for breath beneath trees and hedges during the time of the sun's power, are seen scattering over their pastures to feed, or to play their antics, as a grateful shade succeeds to cool their panting sides.

Baptiste, as is but too apt to be the case with men possessed with brief authority, during the day had mercilessly played the tyrant with all the passengers that were beneath the privileged degrees, more than once threatening to

come to extremities with several who had betrayed restlessness under the restraint and suffering of their unaccustomed situation. Perhaps there is no man who feels less for the complaints of the novice than your weather-beaten and hardened mariner ; for, familiarized to the suffering and confinement of a vessel, and at liberty himself to seek relief in his duties and avocations, he can scarcely enter into the privations and embarrassments of those to whom all is so new and painful. But, in the patron of the Winkelried, there existed a natural indifference to the grievances of others, and a narrow selfishness of disposition, in aid of the opinions which had been formed by a life of hardship and exposure. He considered the vulgar passenger as so much troublesome freight, which, while it brought the advantage of a higher remuneration than the same cubic measurement of inanimate matter, had the unpleasant drawback of volition and motion. With this general tendency to bully and intimidate, the wary patron had, however, made a silent exception in favor of the Italian, who has introduced himself to the reader by the ill-omened name of *Il Maledetto*, or the accused. This formidable personage had enjoyed a perfect immunity from the effects of Baptiste's tyranny, which he had been able to establish by a very simple and quiet process. Instead of cowering at the fierce glance, or recoiling at the rude remonstrances of the churlish patron, he had chosen his time, when the latter was in one of his hottest ebullitions of anger, and when maledictions and menaces flowed out of his mouth in torrents, coolly to place himself on the very spot that the other had proscribed, where he maintained his ground with a quietness and composure which it might have been difficult to say was more to be imputed to extreme ignorance, or to immeasurable contempt. At least, so reasoned the spectators ; some thinking that the stranger meant to bring affairs to a speedy issue by braving the patron's fury, and others charitably inferring that he knew no better. But thus did not Baptiste reason himself. He saw by the calm eye and resolute demeanor of his passenger that he himself, his pretended professional difficulties, his captiousness, and his threats were alike despised ; and he shrank from collision with such a spirit precisely on the principle that the intimidated among the rest of the travellers shrank from a contest with his own. From this

moment Il Maledetto, or, as he was called by Baptiste himself, who it would appear had some knowledge of his person, Maso became as completely the master of his own movements, as if he had been one of the more honored in the stern of the bark, or even her patron. He did not abuse his advantage, however, rarely quitting the indicated station near his own effects, where he had been mainly content to repose in listless indolence like the others, dozing away the minutes.

But the scene was now altogether changed. The instant the wrangling, discontented, and unhappy, because disappointed, patron confessed his inability to reach his port before the coming of the expected night-breeze, and threw himself on a bale to conceal his dissatisfaction in sleep, head arose after head from among the pile of freight, and body after body followed the nobler member, until the whole mass was alive with human beings. The invigorating coolness, the tranquil hour, the prospect of a safe if not a speedy arrival, and the relief from excessive weariness, produced a sudden and agreeable reaction in the feelings of all. Even the Baron de Willading and his friends, who had shared in none of the especial privations just named, joined in the general exhibition of satisfaction and good-will, rather aiding by their smiles and affability, than restraining by their presence, the whims and jokes of the different individuals among the motley group of their nameless companions.

The aspect and position of the bark, as well as the prospects of those on board as they were connected with their arrival, now deserve to be more particularly mentioned. The manner in which the vessel was loaded to the water's edge has already been more than once alluded to. The whole of the centre of the broad deck, a portion of the Winkelbried which, owing to the overhanging gangways, possessed, in common with all the similar craft of the Leman, a greater width than is usual in vessels of the same tonnage elsewhere, was so cumbered with freight as barely to leave a passage to the crew, forward and aft, by stepping among the boxes and bales that were piled much higher than their own heads. A little vacant space was left near the stern, in which it was possible for the party who occupied that part of the deck to move, though in sufficiently straitened limits, while the huge tiller played in its semicircle behind. At the other extremity, as is ab-

solutely necessary in all navigation, the forecastle was reasonably clear, though even this important part of the deck was bristling with the flukes of no less than nine anchors that lay in a row across its breadth, the wild roadsteads of this end of the lake rendering such a provision of ground-tackle absolutely indispensable to the safety of every craft that ventured into its eastern horn. The effect of the whole, seen as it was in a state of absolute rest, was to give to the Winkelried the appearance of a small mound in the midst of the water, that was crowded with human beings, and seemingly so incorporated with the element on which it floated as to grow out of its bosom ; an image that the fancy was not slow to form, aided as it was by the reflection of the mass that the unruffled lake threw back from its mirror-like face, as perfectly formed, as unwieldy, and nearly as distinct as the original. To this picture of a motionless rock, or island, the spars, sails, and high, pointed beak, however, formed especial exceptions. The yards hung, as seamen term it, a-cockbill, or in such negligent and picturesque positions as an artist would most love to draw, while the drapery of the canvas was suspended in graceful and spotless festoons, as it had fallen by chance, or been cast carelessly from the hands of the boatmen. The beak, or prow, rose in its sharp gallant stem, resembling the stately neck of a swan, lightly swerving from its direction, or inclining in a nearly imperceptible sweep, as the hull yielded to the secret influence of the varying currents.

When the teeming pile of freight, therefore, began so freely to bring forth, and traveller after traveller left his pallet, there was no great space found in which they could stretch their wearied limbs, or seek the change they needed. But suffering is a good preparative for pleasure, and there is no sweetener of liberty like previous confinement. Baptiste was no sooner heard to snore than the whole hummock of cargo was garnished with upright bodies and stretching arms and legs, as mice are known to steal from their holes during the slumbers of their mortal enemy, the cat.

The reader has been made sufficiently acquainted with the moral composition of the Winkelried's living freight, in the opening chapter. As it had undergone no other alteration than that produced by lassitude, he is already prepared, therefore, to renew his communications with its

different members, all of whom were well disposed to show off in their respective characters, the moment they were favored with an opportunity. The mercurial Pippo, as he had been the most difficult to restrain during the day, was the first to steal from his lair, now that the Argus-like eyes of Baptiste permitted the freedom, and the exhilarating coolness of the sunset invited action. His success emboldened others, and ere long, the buffoon had an admiring audience around him, that was well disposed to laugh at his witticisms, and to applaud all his practical jokes. Gaining courage as he proceeded, the buffoon gradually went from liberty to liberty, until he was at length triumphantly established on what might be termed an advanced spur of the mountain formed by the tubs of Nicklaus Wagner, in the regular exercise of his art ; while a crowd of amused and gaping spectators blustered about him, peopling every eminence of the height, and even invading the more privileged deck in their eagerness to see and to admire.

Though frequently reduced by adverse fortune to the lowest shifts of his calling, such as the horse-play of Policinello, and the imitation of uncouth sounds, that resembled nothing either in heaven or earth, Pippo was a clever knave in his way, and was quite equal to a display of the higher branches of his art, whenever chance gave him an audience capable of estimating his qualities. On the present occasion he was obliged to address himself both to the polished and to the unpolished ; for the proximity of their position, as well as a good-natured readiness to lend themselves to fooleries that were so agreeable to most around them, had brought the more gentle portion of the passengers within the influence of his wit.

“And now, illustrissimi signori,” continued the wily juggler, after having drawn a burst of applause by one of his happiest hits in a sleight-of-hand exhibition, “I come to the most imposing and the most mysterious part of my knowledge—that of looking into the future and of foretelling events. If there are any among you who would wish to know how long they are to eat the bread of toil, let them come to me ; if there is a youth who wishes to learn whether the heart of his mistress is made of flesh or of stone—a maiden that would see into a youth’s faith and constancy while her long eyelashes cover her sight like a modest silken veil—or a noble, that would fain have an

insight into the movements of his rivals at court or council, let them all put their questions to Pippo, who has an answer ready for each, and an answer so real that the most expert among the listeners will be ready to swear that a lie from his mouth is worth more than truth from that of another man."

"He that would gain credit for knowledge of the future," gravely observed the Signore Grimaldi, who had listened to his countryman's voluble eulogium on his own merits with a good-natured laugh, "had best commence by showing his familiarity with the past. Who and what is he that speaks to thee, as a specimen of thy skill in sooth-saying?"

"His *eccellenza* is more than he seems, less than he deserves to be, and as much as any present. He hath an old and a prized friend at his elbow; hath come because it was his pleasure, to witness the games at Vévey—will depart for the same reason, when they are over, and will seek his home at his leisure—not like a fox stealing into his hole, but as the stately ship sails gallantly, and by the light of the sun, into her haven."

"This will never do, Pippo," returned the good-humored old noble; "at need I might equal this myself. Thou shouldst relate that which is less probable, while it is more true."

"Signore, we prophets like to sleep in whole skins. If it be your *eccellenza's* pleasure and that of your noble company to listen to the truly wonderful, I will tell some of these honest people matters touching their own interests that they do not know themselves, and yet it shall be as clear to everybody else as the sun in the heavens at noon-day."

"Thou wilt probably tell them their faults?"

"Your *eccellenza* has a right to my place, for no prophet could have better divined my intention," answered the laughing knave. "Come nearer, friend," he added, beckoning to the Bernois; "thou art Nicklaus Wagner, a fat peasant of the great canton, and a warm husbandman, that fancies he has a title to the respect of all he meets, because some one among his fathers bought a right in the *bürgerschaft*. Thou hast a large stake in the Winkelried, and art at this moment thinking what punishment is good enough for an impudent soothsayer who dares dive so unceremoniously into the secrets of so warm a citizen, while

all around thee wish thy cheeses had never left the dairy, to the discomfort of our limbs and to the great detriment of the bark's speed."

This sally at the expense of Nicklaus drew a burst of merriment from the listeners ; for the selfish spirit he had manifested throughout the day had won little favor with a majority of his fellow travellers, who had all the generous propensities that are usually so abundant among those who have little or nothing to bestow, and who were by this time so well disposed to be merry that much less would have served to stimulate their mirth.

"Wert thou the owner of this good freight, friend, thou might find its presence less uncomfortable than thou now appearest to think," returned the literal peasant, who had no humor for raillery, and to whom a jest on the subject of property had that sort of irreverent character that popular opinion and holy sayings have attached to waste. "The cheeses are well enough where they find themselves ; if thou dislikest their company thou hast the alternative of the water."

"A truce between us, worshipful burgher ! and let our skirmish end in something that may be useful to both. Thou hast that which would be acceptable to me, and I have that which no owner of cheeses would refuse, did he know the means by which it might be come at honestly."

Nicklaus growled a few words of distrust and indifference, but it was plain that the ambiguous language of the juggler, as usual, had succeeded in awakening interest. With the affectation of a mind secretly conscious of its own infirmity, he pretended to be indifferent to what the other professed a readiness to reveal, while with the rapacity of a grasping spirit he betrayed a longing to know more.

"First I will tell thee," said Pippo, with a parade of good nature, "that thou deservest to remain in ignorance, as a punishment of thy pride and want of faith ; but it is the failing of your prophet to let that be known which he ought to conceal. Thou flatterest thyself this is the fattest cargo of cheeses that will cross the Swiss waters this season, on their way to an Italian market ? Shake not thy head. 'Tis useless to deny it to a man of my learning !"

"Nay, I know there are others as heavy, and, it may be, as good ; but this has the advantage of being the first, a circumstance that is certain to command a price."

"Such is the blindness of one that nature sent on earth

to deal in cheeses!" The Herr von Willading and his friends smiled among themselves at the cool impudence of the mountebank—"Thou fanciest it is so; and at this moment a heavily laden bark is driven before a favorable gale, near the upper end of the lake of the four cantons, while a long line of mules is waiting at Flüellen to bear its freight by the paths of the St. Gothard to Milano, and other rich markets of the south. In virtue of my secret power, I see that, in despite of all thy cravings, it will arrive before thine."

Nicklaus fidgeted, for the graphic particularity of Pippo almost led him to believe the augury might be true.

"Had this bark sailed according to our covenant," he said, with a simplicity that betrayed his uneasiness, "the beasts bespoken by me would now be loading at Ville-neuve; and, if there be justice in Vaud, I shall hold Baptiste responsible for any disadvantage that may come of the neglect."

"Luckily, the generous Baptiste is asleep," returned Pippo, "or we might hear objections to this scheme. But, signori, I see you are satisfied with this insight into the character of the warm peasant of Berne, who, to say truth, has not much to conceal from us, and I will turn my searching looks into the soul of this pious pilgrim, the reverend Conrado, whose unction may well go near to be a leaven sufficient to lighten all in the bark of their burdens of backslidings. Thou carriest the penitence and prayers of many sinners, besides some merchandise of this nature of thine own."

"I am bound to Loretto, with the mental offerings of certain Christians, who are too much occupied with their daily concerns to make the journey in person," answered the pilgrim, who never absolutely threw aside his professional character, though he cared in general so little about his hypocrisy being known. "I am poor and humble of appearance, but I have seen miracles in my day!"

"If any trust valuable offerings to thy keeping thou art a living miracle in thine own person! I can foresee that thou wilt bear naught else beside aves."

"Nay, I pretend to deal in little more. The rich and great, they that send vessels of gold and rich dresses to Our Lady, employ their own favorite messengers; I am but the bearer of prayer and the substitute for the penitent. The sufferings that I undergo in the flesh are passed to the

credit of my employers, who get the benefit of my aches and pains. I pretend to be no more than their go-between, as yonder mariner has so lately called me."

Pippo turned suddenly, following the direction of the other's eye, and cast a glance at the self-styled *Il Male-detto*. This individual, of all the common herd, had alone forborne to join the gaping and amused crowd near the juggler. His forbearance or want of curiosity, had left him in the quiet possession of the little platform that was made by the stowage of the boxes, and he now stood on the summit of the pile, conspicuous by his situation and mien, the latter being remarkable for its unmoved calmness, heightened by the understanding manner that is so peculiar to a seaman when afloat.

"Wilt thou have the history of thy coming perils, friend mariner?" cried the mercurial mountebank; "a journal of thy future risks and tempests to amuse you in this calm? Such a picture of sea-monsters and of coral that grows in the ocean's caverns, where mariners sleep, that shall give thee the nightmare for months, and cause thee to dream of wrecks and bleached bones for the rest of thy life? Thou hast only to wish it, to have the adventures of thy next voyage laid before thee, like a map."

"Thou wouldst gain more credit with me, as one cunning in thy art, by giving the history of the last."

"The request is reasonable, and thou shalt have it; for I love the bold adventurer that trusts himself hardily upon the great deep," answered the unabashed Pippo. "My first lessons in necromancy were received on the mole of Napoli, amid burly Inglesi, straight-nosed Greeks, swarthy Sicilians, and Maltese with spirits as fine as the gold of their own chains. This was the school in which I learned to know my art, and an apt scholar I proved in all that touches the philosophy and humanity of my craft. Signore, thy palm?"

Maso spread his sinewy hand in the direction of the juggler, without descending from his elevation, and in a way to show that, while he would not balk the common humor, he was superior to the gaping wonder and childish credulity of most of those who watched the result. Pippo affected to stretch out his neck, in order to study the hard and dark lines, and then he resumed his revelations, like one perfectly satisfied with what he had discovered.

"The hand is masculine, and has been familiar with

many friends in time. It hath dealt with steel, and cordage, and saltpetre, and most of all with gold. Signori, the true seat of a man's digestion lies in the palm of his hand; if that is free to give and to receive, he will never have a costive conscience, for of all damnable inconveniences that afflict mortals, that of a conscience that will neither give up nor take is the heaviest curse. Let a man have as much sagacity as shall make him a cardinal, if it get entangled in the meshes of one of your unyielding consciences, ye shall see him a mendicant brother to his dying day; let him be born a prince, with a close-ribbed opinion of this sort, and he had better have been born a beggar, for his reign will be like a river from which the current sets outward, without any return. No, my friends, a palm like this of Maso's is a favorable sign, since it hinges on a pliant will, that will open and shut like a well-formed eye, or the jacket of a shell-fish, at its owner's pleasure. Thou hast drawn near to many ports before this of Vévey, after the sun has fallen low, Signor Maso!"

"In that I have taken a seaman's chances, which depend more on the winds than on his own wishes."

"Thou esteemest the bottom of the craft in which thou art required to sail as far more important than her ancient. Thou hast an eye for a keel, but none for color; unless, indeed, as it may happen to be convenient to seem that thou art not."

"Nay, Master Soothsayer, I suspect thee to be an officer of some of the Holy Brotherhoods, sent in this guise to question us poor travellers to our ruin!" answered Maso. "I am, what thou seest, but a poor mariner that hath no better bark under him than this of Baptiste, and on a sea no larger than a Swiss lake."

"Shrewdly observed," said Pippo, winking to those near him, though he so little liked the eye and bearing of the other that he was not sorry to turn to some new subject. "But what matters it, Signori, to be speaking of the qualities of men! We are alike honorable, merciful, more disposed to help others than to help ourselves, and so little given to selfishness that nature has been obliged to supply every mother's son of us with a sort of goad, that shall be constantly pricking us on to look after our own interests. Here are animals whose dispositions are less understood, and we will bestow a useful minute in examining their qualities. Reverend Augustine, this mastiff of thine is named Uberto?"

"He is known by that appellation throughout the cantons and their allies. The fame of the dog reaches even to Turin, and to most of the towns in the plain of Lombardy."

"Now, Signori, you perceive that this is but a secondary creature in the scale of animals. Do him good and he will be grateful; do him harm, and he will forgive. Feed him, and he is satisfied. He will travel the paths of the St. Bernard night and day to do credit to his training, and when the toil is ended, all he asks is just as much meat as will keep the breath within his ribs. Had Heaven given Uberto a conscience and greater wit, the first might have shown him the impiety of working for travellers on holy days and festas, while the latter would be apt to say he was a fool for troubling himself about the safety of others at all."

"And yet his masters, the good Augustines themselves, do not hold so selfish a creed!" observed Adelheid.

"Ah! they have heaven in view! I cry the reverend Augustine's pardon—but, lady, the difference is in the length of the calculation. Woe's me, brethren; I would that my parents had educated me for a bishop, or a viceroy, or some other modest employment, that this learned craft of mine might have fallen into better hands! Ye would lose in instruction, but I should be removed from the giddy heights of ambition, and die at last with some hopes of being a saint. Fair lady, thou travellest on a bootless errand, if I know the reason that tempts thee to cross the Alps at this late season of the year."

This sudden address caused both Adelheid and her father to start, for, in despite of pride and the force of reason, it is seldom that we can completely redeem our opinions from the shackles of superstition, and that dread of the unseen future which appears to have been entailed upon our nature, as a ceaseless monitor of the eternal state of being to which all are hastening, with steps so noiseless and yet so sure. The countenance of the maiden changed, and she turned a quick, involuntary glance at her anxious parent, as if to note the effect of this rude announcement on him before she answered.

"I go in quest of the blessing, health," she said, "and I should be sorry to think thy prognostic likely to be realized. With youth, a good constitution, and tender friends on my side, there is reason to think thou mayest, in this at least, prove a false prophet."

"Lady, hast thou hope?"

Pippo ventured this question as he had ventured his opinion; that is to say, recklessly, pretendingly, and with great indifference to any effect it might have, except as it was likely to establish his reputation with the crowd. Still, it would seem that, by one of those singular coincidences that are hourly occurring in real life, he had unwittingly touched a sensitive chord in the system of his fair fellow traveller. Her eyes sank to the deck at this abrupt question, the color again stole to her polished temples, and the least practised in the emotions of the sex might have detected painful embarrassment in her mien. She was, however, spared the awkwardness of a reply, by the unexpected and prompt interference of Maso.

"Hope is the last of our friends to prove recreant," said this mariner, "else would the cases of many in company be bad enough, thine own included, Pippo; for, judging by the outward signs, the Swabian campaign has not been rich in spoils."

"Providence has ordered the harvest of wit much as it has ordered the harvests of the field," returned the juggler, who felt the sarcasm of the other's remark with all the poignancy that it could derive from truth; since, to expose his real situation, he was absolutely indebted to an extraordinary access of generosity in Baptiste for his very passage across the Leman. "One year, thou shalt find the vineyard dripping liquors precious as diamonds, while in the next barrenness shall make it its seat. To-day the peasant will complain that poverty prevents him from building the covering necessary to house his crops, while to-morrow he will be heard groaning over empty garners. Abundance and famine travel the earth hard upon each other's heels, and it is not surprising that he who lives by his wits should sometimes fail of his harvest, as well as he who lives by his hands."

"If constant custom can secure success, the pious Conrad should be prosperous," answered Maso, "for, of all machinery, that of sin is the least seldom idle. His trade at least can never fail for want of employers."

"Thou hast it, Signor Maso; and it is for this especial reason that I wish my parents had educated me for a bishopric. He that is charged with reproving his fellow-creatures for their vices need never know an idle hour."

"Thou dost not understand what thou sayest," put in

Conrad ; "love for the saints has much fallen away since my youth, and where there is one Christian ready now to bestow his silver, in order to get the blessing of some favorite shrine, there were then ten. I have heard the elders of us pilgrims say that fifty years since 'twas a pleasure to bear the sins of a whole parish, for ours is a business in which the load does not so much depend on the amount as the quality ; and in their time there were willing offerings, frank confessions, and generous consideration for those who undertook the toil."

"In such a trade, the less thou hast to answer for in behalf of others, the more will pass to thy credit on the score of thine own backslidings," pithily remarked Nicklaus Wagner, who was a sturdy Protestant, and apt enough at levelling these side-hits at those who professed a faith obnoxious to the attacks of all who dissented from the opinions and the spiritual domination of Rome.

But Conrad was a rare specimen of what may be effected by training and well-rooted prejudices. In presenting this man to the mind of the reader, we have no intention to impugn the doctrines of the particular church to which he belonged, but simply to show, as the truth will fully warrant, to what a pass of flagrant and impudent pretension the qualities of man, unbridled by the wholesome corrective of a sound and healthful opinion, were capable of conducting abuses on the most solemn and gravest subjects. In that age usages prevailed, and were so familiar to the minds of the actors as to excite neither reflection nor comment, which would now lead to revolutions, and a general rising in defence of principles which are held to be clear as the air we breathe. Though we entertain no doubt of the existence of that truth which pervades the universe, and to which all things tend, we think the world, in its practices, its theories, and its conventional standards of right and wrong, is in a condition of constant change, which it should be the business of the wise and good to favor, so long as care is had that the advantage is not bought by reaction of evil that shall more than prove its counterpoise. Conrad was one of the lowest class of those fungi that grow out of the decayed parts of the moral, as their more material types prove the rottenness of the vegetable world ; and the probability of the truth of the portraiture is not to be loosely denied, without mature reflection on the similar anomalies that are yet to be

found on every side of us, or without studying the history of the abuses which then disgraced Christianity, and which, in truth, became so intolerable in their character, and so hideous in their features, as to be the chief influencing cause to bring about their own annihilation.

Pippo, who had that useful tact which enables a man to measure his own estimation with others, was not slow to perceive that the more enlightened part of his audience began to tire of this pretending buffoonery. Resorting to a happy subterfuge, by means of one of his sleight-of-hand expedients, he succeeded in transferring the whole of that portion of the spectators who still found amusement in his jugglery to the other end of the vessel, where they established themselves among the anchors, ready as ever to swallow an aliment that seems to find an inextinguishable appetite for its reception among the vulgar. Here he continued his exhibition, now moralizing in the quaint and often in the pithy manner which renders the southern buffoon so much superior to his duller competitor of the north, and uttering a wild jumble of wholesome truths, loose morality, and witty innuendoes, the latter of which never failed to extort roars of laughter from all but those who happened to be their luckless subjects.

Once or twice Baptiste raised his head, and stared about him with drowsy eyes, but, satisfied there was nothing to be done in the way of forcing the vessel ahead, he resumed his nap, without interfering in the pastime of those whom he had hitherto seemed to take pleasure in annoying. Left entirely to themselves, therefore, the crowd on the fore-castle represented one of those every-day but profitable pictures of life which abound under our eyes, but which, though they are pregnant with instruction, are treated with the indifference that would seem to be the inevitable consequence of familiarity.

The crowded and overloaded bark might have been compared to the vessel of human life, which floats at all times, subject to the thousand accidents of a delicate and complicated machinery, the lake so smooth and alluring in its present tranquillity, but so capable of clashing its iron-bound coasts with fury, to a treacherous world, whose smile is almost always as dangerous as its frown; and, to complete the picture, the idle, laughing, thoughtless, and yet inflammable group that surrounded the buffoon, to the unaccountable medley of human sympathies, of sudden and

fierce passions, of fun and frolic, so inexplicably mingled with the grossest egotism that enters into the heart of man : in a word, to so much that is beautiful and divine, with so much that would seem to be derived directly from the demons, a compound which composes this mysterious and dread state of being, and which we are taught, by reason and revelation, is only a preparation for another still more incomprehensible and wonderful.

CHAPTER V.

“How like a fawning publican he looks !”—*Shylock*.

THE change of the juggler's scene of action left the party in the stern of the barge in quiet possession of their portion of the vessel. Baptiste and his boatmen still slept among the boxes ; Maso continued to pace his elevated platform above their heads ; and the meek-looking stranger, whose entrance into the barge had drawn so many witticisms from Pippo, sat a little apart, silent, furtively observant, and retiring, in the identical spot he had occupied throughout the day. With these exceptions, the whole of the rest of the travellers were crowding around the person of the mountebank. Perhaps, we have not done well, however, in classing either of the two just named with the more common herd, for there were strong points of difference to distinguish both from most of their companions.

The exterior and the personal appointments of the unknown traveller, who had shrunk so sensitively before the hits of the Neapolitan, were greatly superior to those of any other in the bark beneath the degree of the gentle, not even excepting those of the warm peasant Nicklaus Wagner, the owner of so large a portion of the freight. There was a decency of air that commanded more respect than it was then usual to yield to the nameless, a quietness of demeanor that denoted reflection, and the habit of self-study and self-correction, together with a deference to others that was well adapted to gain friends. In the midst of the noisy, clamorous merriment of all around him, his restrained and rebuked manner had won upon the favor of the more privileged who had unavoidably noticed the

difference, and had prepared the way to a more frank communication between the party of the noble, and one who, if not their equal in the usual points of worldly distinction, was greatly superior to those among whom he had been accidentally cast by the chances of his journey. Not so with Maso ; he, apparently, had little in common with the unobtruding and silent being that sat so near his path, in the short turns he was making to and fro across the pile of freight. The mariner was much the younger, his years scarcely reaching thirty, while the head of the unknown traveller was already beginning to be sprinkled with gray. The walk, attitudes, and gestures of the former, were also those of a man confident of himself, a little addicted to be indifferent to others, and far more disposed to lead than to follow. These are qualities that it may be thought his present situation was scarcely suited to discover, but they had been made sufficiently apparent by the cool, calculating looks he threw, from time to time, at the manœuvres commanded by Baptiste, the expressive sneer with which he criticised his decisions, and a few biting remarks which had escaped him in the course of the day, and which had conveyed anything but compliments to the nautical skill of the patron and his fresh-water followers. Still there were signs of better stuff in this suspicious-looking person than are usually seen about men whose attire, pursuits, and situation, are so indicative of the world's pressing hard upon their principles, as happened to be the fact with this poor and unknown seaman. Though ill clad, and wearing about him the general tokens of a vagrant life, and that close connection with society that is usually taken as sufficient evidence of one's demerits, his countenance occasionally denoted thought, and, during the day, his eye had frequently wandered toward the group of his more intelligent fellow passengers, as if he found subjects of greater interest in their discourse, than in the rude pleasantries and practical jokes of those nearer his person.

The high bred are always courteous, except in cases in which presumption repels civility ; for they who are accustomed to the privileges of station, think far less of their immunities than they, who, by being excluded from the fancied advantages, are apt to exaggerate a superiority that a short experience would show becomes of very questionable value in the possession. Without the equitable

provision of Providence, the laws of civilized society would become truly intolerable, for, if peace of mind, pleasure, and what is usually termed happiness, were the exclusive enjoyment of those who are rich and honored, there would, indeed, be so crying an injustice in their present ordinances as could not long withstand the united assaults of reason and justice. But, happily for the relief of the less gifted and the peace of the world, the fact is very different. Wealth has its peculiar woes ; honors and privileges pall in the use ; and, perhaps, as a rule, there is less of that regulated contentment, which forms the nearest approach to the condition of the blessed of which this unquiet state of being is susceptible, among those who are usually the most envied by their fellow creatures, than in any other of the numerous gradations into which the social scale has been divided. He who reads our present legend with the eyes that we could wish, will find in its moral the illustration of this truth ; for, if it is our intention to delineate some of the wrongs that spring from the abuses of the privileged and powerful, we hope equally to show how completely they fall short of their object, by failing to confer that exclusive happiness which is the goal that all struggle to attain.

Neither the Baron de Willading, nor his noble friend, the Genoese, though educated in the opinions of their caste, and necessarily under the influence of the prejudices of the age, was addicted to the insolence of vulgar pride. Their habits had revolted at the coarseness of the majority of the travellers, and they were glad to be rid of them by the expedient of Pippo ; but no sooner did the modest, decent air of the stranger who remained, make itself apparent, than they felt a desire to compensate him for the privations he had already undergone, by showing the civilities that their own rank rendered so easy and usually so grateful. With this view, then, as soon as the noisy *troupe* had departed, the Signor Grimaldi raised his beaver with that discreet and imposing politeness which equally attracts and repels, and addressing the solitary stranger, he invited him to descend, and stretch his legs on the part of the deck which had hitherto been considered exclusively devoted to the use of his own party. The other started, reddened, and looked like one who doubted whether he had heard aright.

“ These noble gentlemen would be glad if you would

come down, and take advantage of this opportunity to relieve your limbs," said the young Sigismund, raising his own athletic arm toward the stranger, to offer its assistance in helping him to reach the deck.

Still the unknown traveller hesitated, in the manner of one who fears he might overstep discretion by obtruding beyond the limits imposed by modesty. He glanced furtively upward at the place where Maso had posted himself, and muttered something of an intention to profit by its present nakedness.

"It has an occupant who does not seem disposed to admit another," said Sigismund, smiling; "your mariner has a self-possession when afloat, that usually gives him the same superiority that the well-armed swasher has among the timid in the street. You would do well, then, to accept the offer of the noble Genoese."

The stranger, who had once or twice been called rather ostentatiously by Baptiste the Herr Müller, during the day, as if the patron were disposed to let his hearers know that he had those who at least bore creditable names, even among his ordinary passengers, no longer delayed. He came down from his seat, and moved about the deck, in his usual quiet, subdued manner, but in a way to show that he found a very sensible and grateful relief in being permitted to make the change. Sigismund was rewarded for this act of good nature by a smile from Adelheid, who thought his warm interference in behalf of one, seemingly so much his inferior, did no discredit to his rank. It is possible that the youthful soldier had some secret sentiment of the advantage he derived from his kind interest in the stranger, for his brow flushed, and he looked more satisfied with himself, after this little office of humanity had been performed.

"You are better among us here," the Baron kindly observed, when the Herr Müller was fairly established in his new situation, "than among the freight of the honest Nicklaus Wagner, who, Heaven help the worthy peasant! has loaded us fairly to the water's edge with the notable industry of his dairy people. I like to witness the prosperity of our burghers, but it would have been better for us travellers, at least, had there been less of the wealth of honest Nicklaus in our company. Are you of Berne, or of Zurich?"

"Of Berne, Herr Baron."

"I might have guessed that, by finding you on the Genfer See, instead of on the Wallenstätter. There are many of the Müllers in the Emmen Thal?"

"The Herr is right; the name is frequent, both in that valley, and in Entlibuch."

"It is a frequent appellation among us of the Teutonic stock. I had many Müllers in my company, Gaetano, when we lay before Mantua. I remember that two of the brave fellows were buried in the marshes of that low country; for the fever helped the enemy as much as the sword in the life-wasting campaign of the year we besieged the place."

The more observant Italian saw that the stranger was distressed by the personal nature of the conversation, and, while he quietly assented to his friend's remark, he took occasion to give it a new direction.

"You travel, like ourselves, signore, to get a look at these far-famed revels of the Vévasians?"

"That and affairs have brought me into this honorable company," answered the Herr Müller, whom no kindness of tone, however, could win from his timid and subdued manner of speaking. "And thou, father," turning to the Augustine, "art journeying toward thy mountain residence, after a visit of love to the valleys and their people?"

The monk of St. Bernard assented to the truth of this remark, explaining the manner in which his community were accustomed annually to appeal to the liberality of the generous in Switzerland, in behalf of an institution that was founded in the interest of humanity, without reference to distinction of faith.

"'Tis a blessed brotherhood," answered the Genoese, crossing himself, perhaps as much from habit as from devotion, "and the traveller need wish it well. I have never shared your hospitality, but all report speaks fairly of it, and the title of a brother of San Bernardo should prove a passport to the favor of every Christian."

"Signore," said Maso, stopping suddenly, and taking his part uninvited in the discourse, and yet in a way to avoid the appearance of an impertinent interference, "none know this better than I! A wanderer these many years, I have often seen the stony roof of the hospice with as much pleasure as I have ever beheld the entrance of my haven, when an adverse gale was pressing against my canvas. Honor and a rich *quête* to the clavier of the con-

vent, therefore, for it is bringing succor to the poor and rest to the weary !”

As he uttered this opinion, Maso decorously raised his cap, and pursued his straitened walk with the industry of a caged tiger. It was so unusual for one of his condition to obtrude on the discourse of the fair and noble, that the party exchanged looks of surprise ; but the Signor Grimaldi, more accustomed than most of his friends to the frank deportment and bold speech of mariners, from having dwelt long on the coast of the Mediterranean, felt disposed rather to humor than to repulse this disposition to talk.

“Thou art a Genoese, by thy dialect,” he said, assuming as a matter of course the right to question one of years so much fewer, and of a condition so much inferior to his own.

“Signore,” returned Maso, uncovering himself again, though his manner betrayed profound personal respect rather than the deference of the vulgar, “I was born in the city of palaces, though it was my fortune first to see the light beneath a humble roof. The poorest of us are proud of the splendor of *Genova la Superba*, even if its glory has come from our own groans.”

The Signor Grimaldi frowned. But ashamed to permit himself to be disturbed by an allusion so vague, and perhaps so unpremeditated, and more especially coming as it did from so insignificant a source, his brow regained its expression of habitual composure.

An instant of reflection told him it would be in better taste to continue the conversation, than churlishly to cut it short for so light a cause.

“Thou art too young to have had much connection, either in advantage or in suffering,” he rejoined, “with the erection of the gorgeous dwellings to which thou alludest.”

“This is true, *signore*, except as one is better or worse for those who have gone before him. I am what I seem, more by the acts of others than by any faults of my own. I envy not the rich or great, however ; for one that has seen as much of life as I, knows the difference between the gay colors of the garment, and that of the shrivelled and diseased skin it conceals. We make our *feluccas* glittering and fine with paint, when their timbers work the most, and when the treacherous planks are ready to let in the sea to drown us.”

"Thou hast the philosophy of it, young man, and hast uttered a biting truth, for those who waste their prime in chasing a phantom. Thou hast well bethought thee of these matters, for, if content with thy lot, no palace of our city would make thee happier."

"*If*, signore, is a meaning word! Content is like the northern star—we seamen steer for it, while none can ever reach it!"

"Am I then deceived in thee, after all? Is thy seeming moderation only affected; and wouldst thou be the patron of the bark in which fortune hath made thee only a passenger?"

"And a bad fortune it hath proved," returned Maso, laughing. "We appear fated to pass the night in it, for, so far from seeing any signs of this land-breeze of which Baptiste has so confidently spoken, the air seems to have gone to sleep as well as the crew. Thou art accustomed to this climate, reverend Augustine; is it usual to see so deep a calm on the Leman at this late season?"

A question like this was well adapted to effect the speaker's wish to change the discourse, for it very naturally directed the attention of all present from a subject that was rather tolerated from idleness than interesting in itself, to the different natural phenomena by which they were surrounded. The sunset had now fairly passed, and the travellers were at the witching moment that precedes the final disappearance of the day. A calm so deep rested on the limpid lake, that it was not easy to distinguish the line which separated the two elements, in those places where the blue of the land was confounded with the well-known and peculiar color of the Leman.

The precise position of the Winkelried was near midway between the shores of Vaud and those of Savoy, though nearer to the first than to the last. Not another sail was visible on the whole of the watery expanse, with the exception of one that hung lazily from its yard, in a small bark that was pulling toward St. Gingoulph, bearing Savoyards returning to their homes from the other side of the lake, and which, in that delusive landscape, appeared to the eye to be within a stone's throw of the base of the mountain, though in truth still a weary row from the land.

Nature has spread her work on a scale so magnificent in this sublime region that ocular deceptions of this character abound, and it requires time and practice to judge

of those measurements which have been rendered familiar in other scenes. In like manner to the bark under the rocks of Savoy, there lay another, a heavy-moulded boat, nearly in a line with Villeneuve, which seemed to float in the air instead of its proper element, and whose oars were seen to rise and fall beneath a high mound, that was rendered shapeless by refraction. This was a craft bearing hay from the meadows at the mouth of the Rhone to their proprietors in the villages of the Swiss coast. A few light boats were pulling about in front of the town of Vévey, and a forest of low masts and latine yards, seen in the hundred picturesque attitudes peculiar to the rig, crowded the wild anchorage that is termed its port.

An air-line drawn from St. Saphorin to Meillerie, would have passed between the spars of the Winkelried ; her distance from her haven, consequently, a little exceeded a marine league. This space might readily have been conquered in an hour or two by means of the sweeps, but for the lumbered condition of the decks, which would have rendered their use difficult, and the unusual draught of the bark, which would have caused the exertion to be painful. As it has been seen, Baptiste preferred waiting for the arrival of the night breeze to having recourse to an expedient so toilsome and slow.

We have already said, that the point just described was at the place where the Lemman fairly enters its eastern horn, and where its shores possess their boldest and finest faces. On the side of Savoy, the coast was a sublime wall of rocks, here and there clothed with chestnuts, or indented with ravines and dark glens, and naked and wild along the whole line of their giddy summits. The villages so frequently mentioned, and which have become celebrated in these later times by the touch of genius, clung to the uneven declivities, their lower dwellings laved by the lake, and their upper confounded by the rugged faces of the mountains. Beyond the limits of the Lemman, the Alps shot up in still higher pinnacles, occasionally showing one of those naked excrescences of granite, which rise for a thousand feet above the rest of the range—a trifle in the stupendous scale of the vast piles—and which, in the language of the country, are not inaptly termed Dents, from some fancied and plausible resemblance to human teeth. The verdant meadows of Noville, Aigle, and Bex, spread for leagues between these snow-capped barriers, so dwindle

dled to the eye, however, that the spectator believed that to be a mere bottom, which was, in truth, a broad and fertile plain. Beyond these again, came the celebrated pass of St. Maurice, where the foaming Rhone dashed between two abutments of rock, as if anxious to effect its exit before the superincumbent mountains could come together, and shut it out forever from the inviting basin to which it was hurrying with a never-ceasing din. Behind this gorge, so celebrated as the key of the Valais, and even of the Alps in the time of the conquerors of the world, the background took a character of holy mystery. The shades of evening lay thick in that enormous glen, which was sufficiently large to contain a sovereign state, and the dark piles of mountains beyond were seen in a hazy, confused array. The setting was a gray boundary of rocks, on which fleecy clouds rested, as if tired with their long and high flight, and on which the parting day still lingered soft and lucid. One cone of dazzling white towered over all. It resembled a bright stepping-stone between heaven and earth, the heat of the hot sun falling innocuously against its sides, like the cold and pure breast of a virgin repelling those treacherous sentiments which prove the ruin of a shining and glorious innocence. Across the summit of this brilliant and cloudlike peak, which formed the most distant object in the view, ran the imaginary line that divided Italy from the regions of the north. Drawing nearer, and holding its course on the opposite shore, the eye embraced the range of rampart-like rocks that beetle over Villeneuve and Chillon, the latter a snow-white pile that seemed to rest partly on the land and partly on the water. On the vast débris of the mountains clustered the hamlets of Clarens, Montreux, Châtelard, and all those other places, since rendered so familiar to the reader of fiction by the vivid pen of Rousseau. Above the latter village, the whole of the savage and rocky range receded, leaving the lake-shore to vine-clad côtes that stretch away far to the west.

This scene, at all times alluring and grand, was now beheld under its most favorable auspices. The glare of day had deserted all that belonged to what might be termed the lower world, leaving in its stead the mild hues, the pleasing shadows, and the varying tints of twilight. It is true that a hundred châteaux dotted the Alps, or those mountain pasturages which spread themselves a thousand fathoms above the Lemman, on the foundation of rock that

lay like a wall behind Montreux, shining still with the brightness of a bland even, but all below was fast catching the more sombre colors of the hour.

As the transition from day to night grew more palpable, the hamlets of Savoy became gray and hazy, the shades thickened around the bases of the mountains in a manner to render their forms indistinct and massive, and the milder glory of the scene was transferred to their summits. Seen by sunlight, these noble heights appeared a long range of naked granite, piled on a foundation of chestnut-covered hills, and buttressed by a few such salient spurs as are perhaps necessary to give variety and agreeable shadows to their acclivities. Their outlines were now drawn in those waving lines that the pencil of Raphael would have loved to sketch, dark, distinct, and appearing to be carved by art. The inflected and capricious edges of the rocks stood out in high relief against the background of pearly sky, resembling so much ebony wrought into every fantastic curvature that a wild and vivid fancy could conceive. Of all the wonderful and imposing sights of this extraordinary region, there is perhaps none in which there is so exquisite an admixture of the noble, the beautiful, and bewitching, as in this view of these natural arabesques of Savoy, seen at the solemn hour of twilight.

The Baron de Willading and his friends stood uncovered, in reverence of the sublime picture, which could only come from the hands of the Creator, and with unalloyed enjoyment of the bland tranquillity of the hour. Exclamations of pleasure had escaped them, as the exhibition advanced ; for the view, like the shifting of scenes, was in a constant state of transition under the waning and changing light, and each had eagerly pointed out to the others some peculiar charm of the view. The sight was, in sooth, of a nature to preclude selfishness, no one catching a glimpse that he did not wish to be shared by all. Vévey, their journey, the fleeting minutes, and their disappointment, were all forgotten in the delight of witnessing this evening landscape, and the silence was broken only to express those feelings of delight which had long been uppermost in every bosom.

"I doff my beaver to thy Switzerland, friend Melchior," cried the Signor Grimaldi, after directing the attention of Adelheid to one of the peaks of Savoy, of which he had just remarked that it seemed a spot where an angel might

love to light in his visits to the earth ; “ if thou hast much of this, we of Italy must look to it, or—by the shades of our fathers! we shall lose our reputation for natural beauty. How is it, young lady ; hast thou many of these sunsets at Willading ? or is this, after all, but an exception to what thou seest in common—as much a matter of astonishment to thyself, as—by San Francesco ! good Marcellio, we must even own, it is to thee and to me.”

Adelheid laughed at the old noble’s good-humored rhapsody, but, much as she loved her native land, she could not pervert the truth by pretending that the sight was one to be often met with.

“ If we have not this, however, we have our glaciers, our lakes, our cottages, our *châlets*, our Oberland, and such glens as have an eternal twilight of their own.”

“ Ay, my true-hearted and pretty Swiss, this is well for thee who wilt affirm that a drop of thy snow-water is worth a thousand limpid springs, or thou art not the true child of old Melchior de Willading ; but it is lost on the cooler head of one who has seen other lands. Father Xavier, thou art a neutral, for thy dwelling is on the dividing ridge between the two countries, and I appeal to thee to know if these Helvetians have much of this quality of evening ? ”

The worthy monk met the question in the spirit with which it was asked, for the elasticity of the air, and the heavenly tranquillity and bewitching loveliness of the hour well disposed him to be joyous.

“ To maintain my character as an impartial judge,” he answered, “ I will say that each region has its own advantages. If Switzerland is the most wonderful and imposing, Italy is the most winning. The latter leaves more durable impressions, and is more fondly cherished. One strikes the senses, but the other slowly winds its way into the affections ; and he who has freely vented his admiration in exclamations and epithets in one, will, in the end, want language to express all the secret longings, the fond recollections, the deep repinings, that he retains for the other.”

“ Fairly reasoned, friend Melchior, and like an able umpire, leaving to each his share of consolation and vanity. Herr Müller, dost thou agree in a decision that gives thy much vaunted Switzerland so formidable a rival ? ”

“ Signore,” answered the meek traveller, “ I see enough to admire and love in both, as is always the fact with that which God hath formed. This is a glorious world for the

happy, and most might be so, could they summon courage to be innocent."

"The good Augustine will tell thee that this bears hard on certain points of theology, in which our common nature is treated with but indifferent respect. He that would continue innocent must struggle hard with his propensities."

The stranger was thoughtful, and Sigismund, whose eye had been earnestly riveted on his face, thought that it denoted more of peace than usual.

"Signore," rejoined the Herr Müller, when time had been given for reflection, "I believe it is good for us to know unhappiness. He that is permitted too much of his own will gets to be headstrong, and, like the overfed bullock, difficult to be managed; whereas, he who lives under the displeasure of his fellow creatures is driven to look closely into himself, and comes at last to chasten his spirit by detecting its faults."

"Art thou a follower of Calvin?" demanded the Augustine suddenly, surprised to hear opinions so healthful in the mouth of a dissenter from the true Church.

"Father, I belong neither to Rome nor to the religion of Geneva. I am an humble worshipper of God, and a believer in the blessed mediation of his holy Son."

"How! Where dost thou find such sentiments out of the pale of the Church?"

"In mine own heart. This is my temple, holy Augustine, and I never enter it without adoration for its Almighty founder. A cloud was over the roof of my father, at my birth, and I have not been permitted to mingle much with men; but the solitude of my life has driven me to study my own nature, which I hope has become none the worse for the examination. I know I am an unworthy and sinful man, and I hope others are as much better than I as their opinions of themselves would give reason to think."

The words of the Herr Müller, which lost none of their weight by his unaffected and quiet manner, excited curiosity. At first, most of the listeners were disposed to believe him one of those exaggerated spirits who exalt themselves by a pretended self-abasement, but his natural, quiet, and thoughtful deportment soon produced a more favorable opinion. There was a habit of reflection, a retreating inward look about his eye, that revealed the character of one long and truly accustomed to look more at himself than at others, and which wrought singularly in his behalf.

"We may not all have these flattering opinions of ourselves that thy words would seem to imply, Signor Müller," observed the Genoese, his tone changing to one better suited to soothe the feelings of the person addressed, while a shade insensibly stole over his own venerable features ; "neither are all at peace that so seem. If it will be any consolation to thee to know that others are probably no more happy than myself, I will add that I have known much pain, and that too, amid circumstances which most would deem fortunate, and which, I fear, a great majority of mankind might be disposed to envy."

"I should be base indeed to seek consolation in such a source ! I do not complain, signore, though my whole life has so passed that I can hardly say that I enjoy it. It is not easy to smile when we know that all frown upon us ; else could I be content. As it is, I rather feel than repine."

"This is a most singular condition of the mind," whispered Adelheid to young Sigismund ; for both had been deeply attentive listeners to the calm but strong language of the Herr Müller. The young man did not answer, and his fair companion saw with surprise, that he was pale, and with difficulty noticed her remark with a smile.

"The frowns of men, my son," observed the monk, "are usually reserved for those who offend their ordinances. The latter may not be always just, but there is a common sentiment which refuses to visit innocence, even in the narrow sense in which we understand the word, with undeserved displeasure."

The Herr Müller looked earnestly at the Augustine, and he seemed about to answer ; but, checking the impulse, he bowed in submission. At the same time, a wild, painful smile gleamed on his face.

"I agree with thee, good canon," rejoined the simple-minded Baron ; "we are much addicted to quarreling with the world, but, after all, when we look closely into the matter, it will commonly be found that the cause of our grievance exists in ourselves."

"Is there no Providence, father ?" exclaimed Adelheid, a little reproachfully for one of her respectful habits and great filial tenderness. "Can we recall the dead to life, or keep those quick whom God is pleased to destroy ?"

"Thou hast me, girl !—there is a truth in this that no bereaved parent can deny !"

This remark produced an embarrassed pause during

which the Herr Müller gazed furtively about him, looking from the face of one to that of another, as if seeking for some countenance on which he could rely. But he turned away to the view of those hills which had been so curiously wrought by the finger of the Almighty, and seemed to lose himself in their contemplation.

"This is some spirit that has been bruised by early indiscretion," said the Signor Grimaldi, in a low voice, "and whose repentance is strangely mixed with resignation. I know not whether such a man is most to be envied or pitied. There is a fearful mixture of resignation and of suffering in his air."

"He has not the mien of a stabber or a knave," answered the Baron. "If he comes truly of the Müllers of the Emmen Thal, or even of those of Entlibuch, I should know something of his history. They are warm burghers, and mostly of fair name. It is true, that in my youth one of the family got out of favor with the councils, on account of some concealment of their lawful claims in the way of revenue, but the man made an atonement that was deemed sufficient in amount, and the matter was forgotten. It is not usual, Herr Müller, to meet citizens in our canton who go for neither Rome nor Calvin."

"It is not usual, mein herr, to meet men placed as I am. Neither Rome nor Calvin is sufficient for me;—I have need of God!"

"I fear thou hast taken life?"

The stranger bowed, and his face grew livid, seemingly with the intensity of his own thoughts. Melchior de Wilading so disliked the expression, that he turned away his eyes in uneasiness. The other glanced frequently at the forward part of the bark, and he seemed struggling hard to speak, but, for some strong reason, unable to effect his purpose. Uncovering himself, at length, he said steadily, as if superior to shame, while he fully felt the import of his communication, but in a voice that was cautiously suppressed—

"I am Balthazar, of your canton, Herr Baron, and I pray your powerful succor, should those untamed spirits on the forecastle come to discover the truth. My blood hath been made to curdle to-day whilst listening to their heartless threats and terrible maledictions. Without this fear, I should have kept my secret,—for, God knows, I am not proud of my office!"

The general and sudden surprise, accompanied as it was by a common movement of aversion, induced the Signore Grimaldi to demand the reason.

"Thy name is not in much favor apparently, Herr Müller, or Herr Balthazar, whichever it is thy pleasure to be called," observed the Genoese, casting a quick glance around the circle. "There is some mystery in it, that to me needs explanation."

"Signore, I am the headsman of Berne."

Though long schooled in the polished habits of his high condition, which taught him ordinarily to repress strong emotions, the Signor Grimaldi could not conceal the start which this unexpected announcement produced, for he had not escaped the usual prejudices of men.

"Truly, we have been fortunate in our associate, Melchior," he said dryly, turning without ceremony from the man whose modest, quiet mien had lately interested him so much, but whose manner he now took to be assumed,—few pausing to investigate the motives of those who are condemned of opinion:—"here has been much excellent and useful morality thrown away upon a very unworthy subject!"

The Baron received the intelligence of the real name of their travelling companion with less feeling. He had been greatly puzzled to account for the singular language he had heard, and he found relief in so brief a solution of the difficulty.

"The pretended name, after all, then, is only a cloak to conceal the truth! I know the Müllers of the Emmen Thal so well, that I had great difficulty in fitting the character which the honest man gave of himself fairly upon any one of them all. But it is now clear enough, and doubtless Balthazar has no great reason to be proud of the turn which Fortune has played his family in making them executioners."

"Is the office hereditary?" demanded the Genoese quickly.

"It is. Thou knowest that we of Berne have great respect for ancient usages. He that is born to the Bürger-schaft will die in the exercise of his rights, and he that is born out of its venerable pale must be satisfied to live out of it, unless he has gold or favor. Our institutions are a hint from nature, which leaves men as they are created, preserving the order and harmony of society by venerable

and well-defined laws, as is wise and necessary. In nature, he that is born strong remains strong, and he that has little force must be content with his feebleness."

The Signor Grimaldi looked like one who felt contrition.

"Art thou, in truth, an hereditary executioner?" he asked, addressing Balthazar himself.

"Signore, I am; else would hand of mine have never taken life. 'Tis a hard duty to perform, even under the obligations and penalties of the law;—otherwise, it were accursed!"

"Thy fathers deemed it a privilege!"

"We suffer for their error; signore, the sins of the fathers, in our case, have indeed been visited on the children to the latest generations."

The countenance of the Genoese grew brighter, and his voice resumed the polished tones in which he usually spoke.

"Here has been some injustice of a certainty," he said, "or one of thy appearance would not be found in this cruel position. Depend on our authority to protect thee, should the danger thou seemest to apprehend really occur. Still the laws must be respected, though not always of the rigid impartiality that we might wish. Thou hast owned the imperfection of human nature, and it is not wonderful that its work should have flaws."

"I complain not now of the usage, which to me has become habit, but I dread the untamed fury of these ignorant and credulous men, who have taken a wild fancy that my presence might bring a curse upon the bark."

There are accidental situations which contain more healthful morals than can be drawn from a thousand ingenious and plausible homilies, and in which facts, in their naked simplicity, are far more eloquent than any meaning that can be conveyed by words. Such was the case with this meek and unexpected appeal of Balthazar. All who heard him saw his situation under very different colors from those in which it would have been regarded had the subject presented itself under ordinary circumstances. A common and painful sentiment attested strongly against the oppression that had given birth to his wrongs, and the good Melchior de Willading himself wondered how a case of this striking injustice could have arisen under the laws of Berne.

CHAPTER VI.

“Methought I saw a thousand fearful wrecks,
A thousand men that fishes gnawed upon ;
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
All scattered in the bottom of the sea.”—*Richard III.*

THE flitting twilight was now on the wane, and the shades of evening were gathering fast over the deep basin of the lake. The figure of Maso, as he continued to pace his elevated platform, was drawn dark and distinct against the southern sky, in which some of the last rays of the sun still lingered, but objects on both shores were getting to be confounded with the shapeless masses of the mountains. Here and there a pale star peeped out, though most of the vault that stretched across the confined horizon was shut in by dusky clouds. A streak of dull, unnatural light was seen in the quarter which lay above the meadows of the Rhone, and nearly in a direction with the peak of Mont Blanc, which, though not visible from this portion of the Lemán, was known to lie behind the ramparts of Savoy, like a monarch of the hills entrenched in his citadel of rocks and ice.

The change, the lateness of the hour, and the unpleasant reflections left by the short dialogue with Balthazar, produced a strong and common desire to see the end of a navigation that was beginning to be irksome. Those objects which had lately yielded so much and so pure a delight were now getting to be black and menacing, and the very sublimity of the scale on which Nature had here thrown together her elements was an additional source of uncertainty and alarm. Those fairy-like, softly delineated, natural arabesques, which had so lately been dwelt upon with rapture, were now converted into dreary crags that seemed to beetle above the helpless bark, giving unpleasant admonitions of the savage and inhospitable properties of their iron-bound bases, which were known to prove destructive to all who were cast against them while the elements were in disorder.

These changes in the character of the scene, which in some respects began to take the aspect of omens, were

uneasily witnessed by all in the stern of the bark, though the careless laughter, the rude joke, and the noisy cries, which from time to time arose on the forecastle, sufficiently showed that the careless spirits it held were still indulging in the coarse enjoyments most suited to their habits. One individual, however, was seen stealing from the crowd, and establishing himself on the pile of freight, as if he had a mind more addicted to reflection, and less disposed to unmeaning revelry, than most of those whom he had just abandoned. This was the Westphalian student, who, wearied with amusements that were below the level of his acquirements, and suddenly struck with the imposing aspect of the lake and the mountains, had stolen apart to muse on his distant home and the beings most dear to him, under an excitement that suited those morbid sensibilities which he had long encouraged by a very subtle metaphysical system of philosophy. Until now, Maso had paced his lofty post with his eye fixed chiefly on the heavens in the direction of Mont Blanc, occasionally turning it, however, over the motionless bulk of the bark, but when the student placed himself across his path, he stopped and smiled at the abstracted air and riveted regard with which the youth gazed at a star.

"Art thou an astronomer, that thou lookest so closely at yonder shining world?" demanded Il Maledetto, with the superiority that the mariner afloat is wont successfully to assume over the unhappy wight of a landsman, who is very liable to admit his own impotency on the novel and dangerous element;—"the astrologer himself would not study it more deeply."

"This is the hour agreed upon between me and one that I love, to bring the unseen principle of our spirits together, by communing through its medium."

"I have heard of such means of intercourse. Dost see more than others by reason of such an assistant?"

"I see the object which is gazed upon, at this moment, by kind blue eyes that have often looked upon me in affection. When we are in a strange land, and in a fearful situation, such a communion has its pleasures!"

Maso laid his hand upon the shoulder of the student, which he pressed with the force of a vise.

"Thou art right," he said, moodily; "make the most of thy friendships, and if there are any that love thee, tighten the knot by all the means thou hast. None know

the curse of being deserted in this selfish and cruel battle of interest better than I! Be not ashamed of thy star, but gaze at it till thy eye-strings crack. See the bright eyes of her that loves thee in its twinkling, her constancy in its lustre, and her melancholy in its sadness; lose not the happy moments, for there will soon be a dark curtain to shut out its view."

The Westphalian was struck with the singular energy as well as with the poetry of the mariner, and he distrusted the obvious allusion to the clouds, which were in fact fast covering the vault above their heads.

"Dost thou like the night?" he demanded, turning from his star, in doubt.

"It might be fairer. This is a wild region, and your cold Swiss lakes sometimes become too hot for the stoutest seaman's heart. Gaze at thy star, young man, while thou mayest, and bethink thee of the maiden thou lovest, and of all her kindness; we are on a crazy water, and pleasant thoughts should not be lightly thrown away."

Maso walked away, leaving the student alarmed, uneasy at he knew not what, and yet bent with childish eagerness on regarding the little luminary that occasionally was still seen wading among volumes of vapor. At this instant a shout of unmeaning, clamorous merriment arose on the forecastle.

Il Maledetto did not remain any longer on the pile, but abandoning it to the new occupant, he descended among the silent, thoughtful party who were in possession of the cleared space near the stern. It was now so dark that some little attention was necessary to distinguish faces, even at trifling distances. But by means of moving among these privileged persons with great coolness and seeming indifference, he soon succeeded in placing himself near the Genoese and the Augustine.

"Signore," he said in Italian, raising his cap to the former with the same marked respect as before, though it was evidently no easy matter to impress him with the deference that the obscure usually feel for the great—"this is likely to prove an unfortunate end to a voyage that began with so fair appearances. I could wish that your eccellenza, with all this noble and fair company, was safely landed in the town of Vévey."

"Dost thou mean that we have cause to fear more than delay?"

"Signore, the mariner's life is one of unequal chances now he floats in a lazy calm, and presently he is tossed between heaven and earth, in a way to make the stoutest heart sick. My knowledge of these waters is not great, but there are signs making themselves seen in the sky, here above the peak that lies in the direction of Mont Blanc, that would trouble me, were this our own blue but treacherous Mediterranean."

"What thinkest thou of this, father ; a long residence in the Alps must have given thee some insight into their storms ? "

The Augustine had been grave and thoughtful from the moment that he ceased to converse with Balthazar. He, too, had been struck with the omens ; and long used to study the changes of the weather, in a region where the elements sometimes work their will on a scale commensurate with the grandeur of the mountains, his thoughts had been anxiously recurring to the comforts and security of some of those hospitable roofs in the city to which they were bound, and which were always ready to receive the clavier of St. Bernard, in return for the services and self-denial of his brotherhood.

"With Maso, I could wish we were safely landed," answered the good canon ; "the intense heat that a day like this creates in our valleys and on the lakes so weakens the substrata, or foundations of air, that the cold masses which collect around the glaciers sometimes descend like avalanches from their heights to fill the vacuum. The shock is fearful, even to those who meet it in the glens and among the rocks, but the plunge of such a column of air upon one of the lakes is certain to be terrible."

"And thou thinkest there is danger of one of these phenomena at present ? "

"I know not : but I would we were housed ! That unnatural light above, and this deep tranquillity below, which surpasses an ordinary calm, have already driven me to my aves."

"The reverend Augustine speaks like a bookman, and one who has passed his time up in his mountain-convent in study and reflection," rejoined Maso ; "whereas, the reasons I have to offer savor more of the seaman's practice. A calm like this will be followed sooner or later, by a commotion in the atmosphere. I like not the absence of the breeze from the land, on which Baptiste counted so surely,

and, taking that symptom with the signs of yonder hot sky, I look soon to see this extraordinary quiet displaced by some violent struggle among the winds. Nettuno, too, my faithful dog, has given notice by the manner in which he snuffs the air, that we are not to pass the night in this motionless condition."

"I had hoped ere this to be quietly in our haven. What means yonder bright light? Is it a star in the heavens, or does it merely lie against the side of a huge mountain?"

"There shines old Roger de Blonay!" cried the Baron, heartily, "he knows of our being in the bark, and he has fired his beacon that we may steer by its light."

The conjecture seemed probable, for while the day remained, the castle of Blonay, seated on the bosom of the mountain that shelters Vévey to the northeast, had been plainly visible. It had been much admired, a pleasing object in a view that was so richly studded with hamlets and castles, and Adelheid had pointed it out to Sigismund as the immediate goal of her journey. The lord of Blonay being apprised of the intended visit, nothing was more probable than that he, an old and tried friend of Melchior de Willading's, should show this sign of impatience; partly in compliment to those whom he expected, and partly as a signal that might be really useful to those who navigated the Lemman in a night that threatened so much murky obscurity.

The Signor Grimaldi rightly deemed the circumstances grave, and, calling to him his friend and Sigismund, he communicated the apprehensions of the monk and Maso. A braver man than Melchior de Willading did not dwell in all Switzerland, but he did not hear the gloomy predictions of the Genoese without shaking in every limb.

"My poor enfeebled Adelheid?" he said, yielding to a father's tenderness, "what will become of this frail plant if exposed to a tempest in an unsheltered bark?"

"She will be with her father and with her father's friend," answered the maiden herself; for the narrow limits to which they were necessarily confined, and the sudden burst of feeling in the parent, which had rendered him incautious in pitching his voice, made her the mistress of the cause of alarm. "I have heard enough of what the good Father Xavier and this mariner have said, to know that we are in a situation that might be better; but am I not with tried friends? I know already what the Herr

Sigismund can do in behalf of my life, and come what may, we have all a beneficent guardian in One, who will not leave any of us to perish without remembering we are his children."

"This girl shames us all," said the Signor Grimaldi; "but it is often thus with these fragile beings, who rise the firmest and noblest in moments when prouder man begins to despair. They put their trust in God, who is a prop to sustain even those who are feebler than our gentle Adelheid. But we will not exaggerate the causes of apprehension, which, after all, may pass away like many other threatening dangers, and leave us hours of felicitation and laughter in return for a few minutes of fright."

"Say, rather of thanksgiving," observed the clavier, "for the aspect of the heavens is getting to be fearfully solemn. Thou, who art a mariner—hast thou nothing to suggest?"

"We have the simple expedient of our sweeps, father; but, after neglecting their use so long, it is now too late to have recourse to them. We could not reach Vévey by such means, with this bark loaded to the water's edge, before the night would change, and the water once fairly in motion, they could not be used at all."

"But we have our sails," put in the Genoese, "they at least may do us good service when the wind shall come."

Maso shook his head, but he made no answer. After a brief pause, in which he seemed to study the heavens still more closely, he went to the spot where the patron yet lay lost in sleep, and shook him rudely. "Ho! Baptiste! awake! there is need here of thy counsel and of thy commands."

The drowsy owner of the bark rubbed his eyes, and slowly regained the use of his faculties.

"There is not a breath of wind," he muttered; "why didst awake me, Maso? One that hath led thy life should know, that sleep is sweet to those who toil."

"Aye, 'tis their advantage over the pampered and idle. Look at the heavens, man, and let us know what thou thinkest of their appearance. Is there the stuff in thy Winkelried to ride out the storm like this we may have to encounter?"

"Thou talkest like a foolish quean that has been frightened by the fluttering of her own poultry. The lake was never more calm, or the bark in greater safety."

"Dost see yonder bright light ; here, over the tower of thy Vévey church ?"

"Aye, 'tis a gallant star ! and a fair sign for the mariner."

"Fool, 'tis a hot flame in Roger de Blonay's beacon. They begin to see that we are in danger on the shore, and they cast out their signals to give us notice to be active. They think us bestirring ourselves like stout men, and those used to the water, while, in truth, we are as undisturbed as if the bark were a rock that might laugh at the Leman and its waves. The man is benumbed," continued Maso, turning away toward the anxious listeners ; "he will not see that which is getting to be but too plain to all the others in his vessel."

Another idle and general laugh from the forecastle came to contradict this opinion of Maso's, and to prove how easy it is for the ignorant to exist in security, even on the brink of destruction. This was the moment when nature gave the first of those signals that were intelligent to vulgar capacities. The whole vault of the heavens was now veiled, with the exception of the spot so often named, which lay nearly above the brawling torrents of the Rhone. This fiery opening resembled a window admitting of fearful glimpses into the dreadful preparations that were making up among the higher peaks of the Alps. A flash of red, quivering light was emitted, and a distant rumbling rush, that was not thunder, but rather resembled the wheelings of a thousand squadrons into line, followed the flash. The forecastle was deserted to a man, and the hillock of freight was again darkly seen peopled with crouching human forms. Just then the bark, which had so long lain in a state of complete rest, slowly and heavily raised its bows, as if laboring under its great and unusual burden, while a sluggish swell passed beneath its entire length, lifting the whole mass, foot by foot, and passing away by the stern, to cast itself on the shores of Vaud.

"'Tis madness to waste the precious moments longer !" said Maso, hurriedly, on whom this plain and intelligible hint was not lost. "Signori, we must be bold and prompt, or we shall be overtaken by the tempest unprepared. I speak not for myself, since, by the aid of this faithful dog, and favored by my own arms, I have always the shore for a hope. But there is one in the bark I would wish to save, even at some hazard to myself. Baptiste is unnerved by fear, and we must act for ourselves or perish !"

"What wouldest thou?" demanded the Signor Grimaldi, "he that can proclaim the danger should have some expedient to divert it!"

"More timely exertion would have given us the resource of ordinary means, but, like those who die in their sins, we have foolishly wasted most precious minutes. We must lighten the bark, though it cost the whole of her freight."

A cry from Nicklaus Wagner announced that the spirit of avarice was still active as ever in his bosom! Even Baptiste, who had lost all his dogmatism and his disposition to command, under the imposing omens which had now made themselves apparent even to him, loudly joined in the protest against this waste of property. It is rare that any sudden and extreme proposal, like this of Maso's, meets with a quick echo in the judgments of those to whom the necessity is unexpectedly presented. The danger did not seem sufficiently imminent to have recourse to an expedient so decided; and, though startled and aroused, the untamed spirits of those who crowded the menaced pile, were rather in a state of uneasiness, than of that fierce excitement to which they were so capable of being wrought, and which was in some degree necessary to induce even them, thriftless and destitute as they were, to be the agents of effecting so great a destruction of property. The project of the cool and calculating Maso would therefore have failed entirely, but for another wheeling of those airy squadrons, and a second wave which lifted the groaning bark until the loosened yards swung creaking above their heads. The canvas flapped, too, in the darkness, like some huge bird of prey fluttering its feathers previously to taking wing.

"Holy and just Ruler of the land and the sea!" exclaimed the Augustine, "remember thy repentant children, and have us, at this awful moment, in thy omnipotent protection!"

"The winds are come down, and even the dumb lake sends us the signal to be ready!" shouted Maso. "Overboard with the freight, if ye would live!"

A sudden heavy plunge into the water proved that the mariner was in earnest. Notwithstanding the imposing and awful signs with which they were surrounded, every individual of the nameless herd bethought him of the pack that contained his own scanty worldly effects, and there was a general and quick movement, with a view to secure

them. As each man succeeded in effecting his own object, he was led away by that community of feeling which rules a multitude. The common rush was believed to be with a view to succor Maso, though each man secretly knew the falsity of the impression as respected his own particular case ; and box after box began to tumble into the water, as new and eager recruits lent themselves to the task. The impulse was quickly imparted from one to another, until even young Sigismund was active in the work. On these slight accidents do the most important results depend, when the hot impulses that govern the mass obtain the ascendant.

It is not to be supposed that either Baptiste or Nicklaus Wagner witnessed the waste of their joint effects with total indifference. So far from this, each used every exertion in his power to prevent it, not only by his voice, but with his hands. One menaced the law—the other threatened Maso with condign punishment for his interference with a patron's rights and duties ; but their remonstrances were uttered to inattentive ears. Maso knew himself to be irresponsible by situation, for it was not an easy matter to bring him within the grasp of the authorities ; and as for the others, most of them were far too insignificant to feel much apprehension for a reparation that would be most likely, if it fell at all, to fall on those who were more able to bear it. Sigismund alone exerted himself under a sense of his liabilities ; but he worked for one that was far dearer to him than gold, and little did he bethink him of any other consequences than those which might befall the precious life of Adelheid de Willading.

The meagre packages of the common passengers had been thrown in a place of safety, with the sort of unreflecting instinct with which we take care of our limbs when in danger. This timely precaution permitted each to work with a zeal that found no drawback in personal interest, and the effect was in proportion. A hundred hands were busy, and nearly as many throbbing hearts lent their impulses to the accomplishment of the one important object.

Baptiste and his people, aided by laborers of the port, had passed an entire day in heaping that pile on the deck of the Winkelried, which was now crumbling to pieces with a rapidity that seemed allied to magic. The patron and Nicklaus Wagner bawled themselves hoarse, with ut-

tering useless threats and deprecations, for by this time the laborers in the work of destruction had received some such impetus as the rolling stone acquires by the increased momentum of its descent. Packages, boxes, bales, and everything that came to hand, were hurled into the water frantically, and without other thought than of the necessity of lightening the groaning bark of its burden. The agitation of the lake, too, was regularly increasing, wave following wave, in a manner to cause the vessel to pitch heavily, as it rose upon the coming, or sank with the receding swell. At length, a shout announced that in one portion of the pile the deck was attained!

The work proceeded with greater security to those engaged, for hitherto the motion of the bark, and the unequal footing, frequently rendered their situations, in the darkness and confusion, to the last degree hazardous. Maso now abandoned his own active agency in the toil, for no sooner did he see the others fairly and zealously enlisted in the undertaking, than he ceased his personal efforts to give those directions which, coming from one accustomed to the occupation, were far more valuable than any service that could be derived from a single arm.

"Thou art known to me, Signor Maso," said Baptiste, hoarse with his impotent efforts to restrain the torrent, "and thou shalt answer for this, as well as for other of thy crimes, so soon as we reach the haven of Vévey!"

"Dotard! thou wouldst carry thyself and all with thee, by thy narrowness of spirit, to a port from which, when it is once entered, none ever sail again!"

"It lieth between ye both," rejoined Nicklaus Wagner; "thou art not less to blame than these madmen, Baptiste. Hadst thou left the town at the hour named in our conditions, this danger could not have overtaken us."

"Am I a god to command the winds! I would that I had never seen thee or thy cheeses, or that thou wouldst relieve me of thy presence, and go after them into the lake."

"This comes of sleeping on duty; nay, I know not but that a proper use of the oars would still bring us in, in safety, and without necessary harm to the property of any. Noble Baron de Willading, here may be occasion for your testimony, and, as a citizen of Berne, I pray you to heed well the circumstances."

Baptiste was not in a humor to bear these merited re-

proaches, and he rejoined upon the aggrieved Nicklaus in a manner that would speedily have brought their ill-timed wrangle to an issue, had not Maso passed rudely between them, shoving them asunder with the sinews of a giant. This repulse served to keep the peace for the moment, but the wordy war continued with so much acrimony, and with so many unmeasured terms, that Adelheid and her maids, pale and terror-struck by the surrounding scene as they were, gladly shut their ears, to exclude epithets of such bitterness and menace that they curdled the blood. Maso passed on among the workmen, when he had interposed between the disputants. He gave his orders with perfect self-possession, though his understanding eye perceived that, instead of magnifying the danger, he had himself not fully anticipated its extent. The rolling of the waves was now incessant, and the quick, washing rush of the water, a sound familiar to the seamen, announced that they had become so large that their summits broke, sending their lighter foam ahead. There were symptoms, too, which proved that their situation was understood by those on the land. Lights were flashing along the strand near Vévey, and it was not difficult to detect, even at the distance at which they lay, the evidences of a strong feeling among the people of the town.

"I doubt not that we have been seen," said Melchior de Willading, "and that our friends are busy in devising means to aid us. Roger de Blonay is not a man to see us perish without an effort, nor would the worthy bailiff, Peter Hofmeister, be idle, knowing that a brother of the bürgerschaft, and an old school associate, hath need of his assistance."

"None can come to us without running an equal risk with ourselves," answered the Genoese. "It were better that we should be left to our own exertions. I like the coolness of this unknown mariner, and I put my faith in God!"

A new shout proclaimed that the deck had been gained on the other side of the bark. Much the greater part of the deck-load had now irretrievably disappeared, and the movements of the relieved vessel were more lively and sane. Maso called to him one or two of the regular crew, and together they rolled up the canvas in a manner peculiar to the latine rig; for a breath of hot air, the first of any sort that had been felt for many hours, passed athwart

the bark. This duty was performed, as canvas is known to be furled at need, but it was done securely. Maso then went among the laborers again, encouraging them with his voice, and directing their efforts with his counsel.

"Thou art not equal to thy task," he said, addressing one who was vainly endeavoring to roll a bale to the side of the vessel, a little apart from the rest of the busy crowd; "thou wilt do better to assist the others, than to waste thy force here."

"I feel the strength to remove a mountain! Do we not work for our lives?"

The mariner bent forward, and looked into the other's face. These frantic and ill-directed efforts came from the Westphalian student.

"Thy star has disappeared," he rejoined, smiling—for Maso had smiled in scenes far more imposing than even that with which he was now surrounded.

"She gazes at it still; she thinks of one that loves her, who is journeying far from the fatherland."

"Hold! Since thou wilt have it so, I will help thee to cast this bale into the water. Place thine arm thus; an ounce of well-directed force is worth a pound that acts against itself."

Stooping together, their united strength did that which had baffled the single efforts of the scholar. The package rolled to the gangway, and the German, frenzied with excitement, shouted aloud! The bark lurched, and the bale went over the side, as if the lifeless mass were suddenly possessed with the desire to perform the evolution which its inert weight had so long resisted. Maso recovered his footing, which had been deranged by the unexpected movement, with a seaman's dexterity, but his companion was no longer at his side. Kneeling on the gangway, he perceived the dark bale disappearing in the element, with the feet of the Westphalian dragging after. He bent forward to grasp the rising body, but it never returned to the surface, being entangled in the cords, or, what was equally probable, retained by the frantic grasp of the student, whose mind had yielded to the awful character of the night.

The life of *Il Maledetto* had been one of great vicissitudes and peril. He had often seen men pass suddenly into the other state of existence, and had been calm himself amid the cries, the groans, and what is far more appalling, the execrations of the dying, but never before had he witnessed

so brief and silent an end. For more than a minute, he hung suspended over the dark and working water, expecting to see the student return ; and, when hope was reluctantly abandoned, he arose to his feet, a startled and admonished man. Still discretion did not desert him. He saw the uselessness, and even the danger, of distracting the attention of the workmen, and the ill-fated scholar was permitted to pass away without a word of regret or a comment on his fate. None knew of his loss but the wary mariner, nor was his person missed by any one of those who had spent the day in his company. But she to whom he had plighted his faith on the banks of the Elbe long gazed at that pale star, and wept in bitterness that her feminine constancy met with no return. Her true affections long outlived their object, for his image was deeply enshrined in a warm female heart. Days, weeks, months, and years passed for her in the wasting cheerlessness of hope deferred, but the dark Leman never gave up its secret, and he to whom her lover's fate alone was known little bethought him of an accident which, if not forgotten, was but one of many similar frightful incidents in his eventful career.

Maso reappeared among the crowd with the forced composure of one who well knew that authority was most efficient when most calm. The command of the vessel was now virtually with him, Baptiste, enervated by the extraordinary crisis, and choking with passion, being utterly incapable of giving a distinct or a useful order. It was fortunate for those in the bark that the substitute was so good, for more fearful signs never impended over the Leman than those which darkened the hour.

We have necessarily consumed much time in relating these events, the pen not equalling the activity of the thoughts. Twenty minutes, however, had not passed since the tranquillity of the lake was first disturbed, and so great had been the exertions of those in the Winkelried that the time appeared to be shorter. But, though it had been so well employed, neither had the powers of the air been idle. The unnatural opening in the heavens was shut, and at short intervals, those fearful wheelings of the aërial squadrons were drawing nearer. Thrice had fitful breathings of warm air passed over the bark, and occasionally, as she plunged into a sea that was heavier than common, the faces of those on board were cooled, as it might be with some huge fan. These were no more, however, than sud-

den changes in the atmosphere, of which veins were displaced by the distant struggle between the heated air of the lakes and that which had been chilled on the glaciers, or they were the still more simple result of the violent agitation of the vessel.

The deep darkness which shut in the vault, giving to the embedded Leman the appearance of a gloomy, liquid glen, contributed to the awful sublimity of the night. The ramparts of Savoy were barely distinguishable from the flying clouds, having the appearance of black walls, seemingly within reach of the hand; while the more varied and softer *côtes* of Vaud lay an indefinable and sombre mass, less menacing, it is true, but equally confused and unattainable.

Still the beacon blazed in the grate of old Roger de Blonay, and flaring torches glided along the strand. The shore seemed alive with human beings, able as themselves to appreciate and to feel their situation.

The deck was now cleared, and the travellers were collected in a group between the masts. Pippo had lost all his pleasantry under the dread signs of the hour, and Conrad, trembling with superstition and terror, was free from hypocrisy. They, and those with them, discoursed on their chances, on the nature of the risks they ran, and on its probable causes.

"I see no image of Maria, nor even a pitiful lamp to any of the blessed, in this accursed bark!" said the juggler, after several had hazarded their quaint and peculiar opinions. "Let the patron come forth and answer for his negligence."

The passengers were about equally divided between those who dissented from, and those who worshipped with Rome. This proposal, therefore, met with a mixed reception. The latter protested against the neglect, while the former, equally under the influence of abject fear, were loud in declaring that the idolatry itself might cost them all their lives.

"The curse of Heaven alight on the evil tongue that first uttered the thought!" muttered the trembling Pippo between his teeth, too prudent to fly openly in the face of so strong an opposition, and yet too credulous not to feel the omission in every nerve—"Hast nothing by thee, pious Conrad, that may avail a Christian?"

The pilgrim reached forth his hand with a rosary and

cross. The sacred emblem passed from mouth to mouth, among the believers, with a zeal little short of that they had manifested in unloading the deck. Encouraged by this sacrifice, they called loudly upon Baptiste to present himself. Confronted with these unnurtured spirits, the patron shook in every limb, for, between anger and abject fear, his self-command had by this time absolutely deserted him. To the repeated appeals to procure a light, that it might be placed before a picture of the mother of God, which Conrad produced, he objected his Protestant faith, the impossibility of maintaining the flame while the bark pitched so violently, and the divided opinions of the passengers. The Catholics bethought them of the country and influence of Maso, and they loudly called upon him, for the love of God! to come and enforce their requests. But the mariner was occupied on the fore-castle, lowering one anchor after another into the water, passively assisted by the people of the bark, who wondered at a precaution so useless, since no rope would reach the bottom, even while they did not dare deny his orders. Something was now said of the curse that had alighted on the vessel, in consequence of its patron's intention to embark the headsman. Baptiste trembled to the skin of his crown, and his blood crept with a superstitious awe.

"Dost think there can really be aught in this?" he asked, with parched lips and a faltering tongue.

All distinction of faith was lost in the general ridicule. Now the Westphalian was gone, there was not a man among them to doubt that a navigation so accompanied would be cursed. Baptiste stammered, muttered many incoherent sentences, and finally, in his impotency, he permitted the dangerous secret to escape him.

The intelligence that Balthazar was among them produced a solemn and deep silence. The fact, however, furnished as conclusive evidence of the cause of their peril to the minds of these untutored beings, as a mathematician could have received from the happiest of his demonstrations. New light broke in upon them, and the ominous stillness was followed by a general demand for the patron to point out the man. Obeying this order, partly under the influence of a terror that was allied to his moral weakness, and partly in bodily fear, he shoved the headsman forward, substituting the person of the proscribed man for his own, and, profiting by the occasion, he stole out of the crowd.

When the Herr Müller, or, as he was now known and called, Balthazar, was rudely pushed into the hands of these ferocious agents of superstition, the apparent magnitude of the discovery induced a general and breathless pause. Like the treacherous calm that had so long reigned upon the lake, it was a precursor of a fearful and violent explosion. Little was said, for the occasion was too ominous for a display of vulgar feeling, but Conrad, Pippo, and one or two more silently raised the fancied offender in their arms and bore him desperately toward the side of the bark.

"Call on Maria, for the good of thy soul!" whispered the Neapolitan, with a strange mixture of Christian zeal, in the midst of all his ferocity.

The sound of words like these usually conveys the idea of charity and love; but notwithstanding this gleam of hope, Balthazar still found himself borne toward his fate.

On quitting the throng that clustered together in a dense body between the masts, Baptiste encountered his old antagonist, Nicklaus Wagner. The fury which had so long been pent in his breast suddenly found vent, and in the madness of the moment he struck him. The stout Bernese grappled his assailant, and the struggle became fierce as that of brutes. Scandalized by such a spectacle, offended by the disrespect, and ignorant of what else was passing near—for the crowd had uttered its resolutions in the suppressed voices of men determined—the Baron de Willading and the Signor Grimaldi advanced with dignity and firmness to prevent the shameful strife. At this critical moment the voice of Balthazar was heard above the roar of the coming wind, not calling on Maria, as he had been admonished, but appealing to the two old nobles to save him. Sigismund sprang forward like a lion at the cry, but, too late to reach those who were about to cast the headsman from the gangway, he was just in time to catch the body by its garments, when actually sailing in the air. By a vast effort of strength its direction was diverted. Instead of alighting in the water, Balthazar encountered the angry combatants, who, driven back on the two nobles, forced the whole four over the side of the bark into the water.

The struggle between the two bodies of air ceased, that on the surface of the lake yielding to the avalanche from above, and the tempest came howling upon the bark.

CHAPTER VII.

—“and now the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with their mountain mirth.”—BYRON.

It is necessary to recapitulate a little, in order to connect events. The signs of the hour had been gradually but progressively increasing. While the lake was unruffled, a stillness so profound prevailed, that sounds from the distant port, such as the heavy fall of an oar, or a laugh from the watermen, had reached the ears of those in the Winkelried, bringing with them the feeling of security, and the strong charm of a calm at even. To these succeeded the gathering in the heavens, and the roaring of the winds, as they came rushing down the sides of the Alps, in their first descent into the basin of the Lemman. As the sight grew useless, except as it might study the dark omens of the impending vault, the sense of hearing became doubly acute, and it had been a powerful agent in heightening the vague but acute apprehensions of the travellers. The rushes of the wind, which at first were broken, at intervals resembling the roar of a chimney-top in a gale, had soon reached the fearful grandeur of those aerial wheelings of squadrons to which we have more than once alluded, passing off in dread mutterings, that, in the deep quiet of all other things, bore a close affinity to the rumbling of a surf upon the seashore. The surface of the lake was first broken after one of these symptoms, and it was this infallible sign of a gale which had assured Maso there was no time to lose. This movement of the element in a calm is a common phenomenon on waters that are much environed with elevated and irregular headlands, and it is a certain proof that wind is on some distant portion of the sheet. It occurs frequently on the ocean, too, where the mariner is accustomed to find a heavy sea setting in one direction, the effects of some distant storm, while the breeze around him is blowing in its opposite. It had been succeeded by the single rolling swell, like the outer circle of waves produced by dropping a stone into the water, and the regular and increasing agitation of the lake, until the element broke as in a tempest, and that seemingly of its own volition, since not a breath of air was stirring. This last and

formidable symptom of the force of the coming gust, however, had now become so unequivocal that, at the moment when the three travellers and the patron fell from her gangway, the Winkelried, to use a seaman's phrase, was literally wallowing in the troughs of the seas.

A dull, unnatural light preceded the winds, and notwithstanding the previous darkness, the nature of the accident was fully apparent to all. Even the untamed spirits that had just been bent upon so fierce a sacrifice to their superstitious dread, uttered cries of horror, while the piercing shriek of Adelheid sounded, in that fearful moment, as if beings of superhuman attributes were riding in the gale. The name of Sigismund was heard, too, in one of those wild appeals that the frantic suffer to escape them in their despair. But the interval between the plunge into the water and the swoop of the tempest was so short, that, to the senses of the travellers, the whole seemed the occurrence of the same teeming moment.

Maso had completed his work on the forecastle, had seen that other provisions which he had ordered were duly made, and reached the tiller just in time to witness and to understand all that occurred. Adelheid and her female attendants were already lashed to the principal masts, and ropes were given to the others around her, as indispensable precautions; for the deck of the bark, now cleared of every particle of its freight, was as exposed and as defenceless against the power of the wind as a naked heath. Such was the situation of the Winkelried, when the omens of the night changed to their dread reality.

Instinct, in cases of sudden and unusual danger, must do the office of reason. There was no necessity to warn the unthinking but panic-struck crowd to provide for their own safety, for every man in the centre of the barge threw his body flat on the deck, and grasped the cords that Maso had taken care to provide for that purpose, with the tenacity with which all who possess life cling to the means of existence. The dogs gave beautiful proofs of the secret and wonderful means that nature has imparted, to answer the ends of their creation. Old Uberto crouched, cowering, and oppressed with a sense of helplessness, at the side of his master, while the Newfoundland follower of the mariner went leaping from gangway to gangway, snuffing the heated air and barking wildly, as if he would challenge the elements to close for the strife.

A vast body of warm air had passed unheeded athwart the bark, during the minute that preceded the intended sacrifice of Balthazar. It was the forerunner of the hurricane, which had chased it from the bed where it had been steeping since the warm and happy noon-tide. Ten thousand chariots at their speed could not have equalled the rumbling that succeeded, when the winds came booming over the lake. As if too eager to permit anything within their fangs to escape, they brought with them a wild, dull light, which filled while it clouded the atmosphere, and which, it was scarcely fanciful to imagine, had been hurried down in their vortex from those chill glaciers, where they had so long been condensing their forces for the present descent. The waves were not increased, but depressed by the pressure of this atmospheric column, though it took up hogsheads of water from their crests, scattering it in fine penetrating spray, till the entire space between the heavens and the earth seemed saturated with its particles.

The Winkelried received the shock at a moment when the lee-side of her broad deck was wallowing in the trough, and its weather was protruded on the summit of a swell. The wind howled when it struck the pent limits, as if angered at being thwarted, and there was a roar under the wide gangways, resembling that of lions. The reeling vessel was raised in a manner to cause those on board to believe it about to be lifted bodily from the water, but the ceaseless rolling of the element restored the balance. Maso afterward affirmed that nothing but this accidental position, which formed a sort of lee, prevented all in the bark from being swept from the deck, before the first gust of the hurricane.

Sigismund had heard the heart-rending appeal of Adelheid, and, notwithstanding the awful strife of the elements and the fearful character of the night, he alone breasted the shock on his feet. Though aided by a rope and bowed like a reed, his herculean frame trembled under the shock, in a way to render even his ability to resist seriously doubtful. But, the first blast expended, he sprang to the gangway, and leaped into the caldron of the lake unhesitatingly, and yet in the possession of all his faculties. He was desperately bent on saving a life so dear to Adelheid, or on dying in the attempt.

Maso had watched the crisis with a seaman's eye, a seaman's resources, and a seaman's coolness. He had not re-

fused to quit his feet, but kneeling on one knee, he pressed the tiller down, lashed it, and clinging to the massive timber, faced the tempest with the steadiness of a water-god. There was sublimity in the intelligence, deliberation, and calculating skill with which this solitary, unknown, and nearly hopeless mariner obeyed his professional instinct in that fearful concussion of the elements, which, loosened from every restraint, now appeared abandoned to their own wild and fierce will. He threw aside his cap, pushed forward his thick but streaming locks, as veils to protect his eyes, and watched the first encounter of the wind, as the wary but sullen lion keeps his gaze on the hostile elephant. A grim smile stole across his features, when he felt the vessel settle again into its watery bed, after that breathless moment in which there had been reason to fear it might actually be lifted from its proper element. Then the precaution, which had seemed so useless and incomprehensible to others, came in play. The bark made a fearful whirl from the spot where it had so long lain, yielding to the touch of the gust like a vane turning on its pivot, while the water gurgled several streaks on deck. But the cables were no sooner taut than the numerous anchors resisted, and brought the bark head to wind. Maso felt the yielding of the vessel's stern, as she swung furiously round, and he cheered aloud. The trembling of the timbers, the dashing against the pointed beak, and that high jet of water, which shot up over the bows and fell heavily on the forecastle, washing aft in a flood, were so many evidences that the cables were true. Advancing from his post, with some such dignity as a master of fence displays in the exercise of his art, he shouted for his dog. "Nettuno!—Nettuno!—where art thou, brave Nettuno?"

The faithful animal was whining near him, unheard in that war of the elements. He waited only for this encouragement to act. No sooner was his master's voice heard, than, barking bravely, he snuffed the gale, dashed to the side of the vessel, and leaped into the boiling lake.

When Melchior de Willading and his friend returned to the surface, after their plunge, it was like men making their appearance in a world abandoned to the infernal humors of the fiends of darkness. The reader will understand it was at the instant of the swoop of the winds, that has just been detailed, for what we have taken so many

pages to describe in words, scarce needed a minute of time in the accomplishment.

Maso knelt on the verge of the gangway, sustaining himself by passing an arm around a shroud, and, bending forward, he gazed into the caldron of the lake with aching eyes. Once or twice he thought he heard the stifled breathing of one who struggled with the raging water ; but, in that roar of the winds, it was easy to be deceived. He shouted encouragement to his dog, however, and gathering a small rope rapidly, he made a heaving coil of one of its ends. This he cast far from him, with a peculiar swing and dexterity, hauling-in, and repeating the experiments, steadily and with unwearied industry. The rope was necessarily thrown at hazard, for the misty light prevented more than it aided vision ; and the howling of the powers of the air filled his ears with sounds that resembled the laugh of devils.

In the cultivation of the youthful manly exercises, neither of the old nobles had neglected the useful skill of being able to buffet with the waves. But both possessed what was far better, in such a strait, than the knowledge of a swimmer, in that self-command and coolness in emergencies which they are apt to acquire who pass their time in encountering the hazards and in overcoming the difficulties of war. Each retained a sufficiency of recollection, therefore, on coming to the surface, to understand his situation, and not to increase the danger by the ill-directed and frantic efforts that usually drown the frightened. The case was sufficiently desperate, at the best, without the additional risk of distraction, for the bark had already drifted to some unseen spot, that, as respects them, was quite unattainable. In this uncertainty, it would have been madness to steer amid the waste of waters, as likely to go wrong as right, and they limited their efforts to mutual support and encouragement, placing their trust in God.

Not so with Sigismund. To him the roaring tempest was mute, the boiling and hissing lake had no horrors, and he had plunged into the fathomless Leman as recklessly as he could have leaped to land. The shriek, the "Sigismund ! oh, Sigismund !" of Adelheid, was in his ears, and her cry of anguish thrilled on every nerve. The athletic young Swiss was a practised and expert swimmer, or it is improbable that even these strong impulses could

have overcome the instinct of self-preservation. in a tranquil basin, it would have been no extraordinary or unusual feat for him to conquer the distance between the Winkelreid and the shores of Vaud; but, like all the others, on casting himself into the water, he was obliged to shape his course at random and this, too, amid such a driving spray as rendered even respiration difficult. As has been said, the waves were compressed into their bed rather than augmented by the wind; but, had it been otherwise, the mere heaving and settling of the element, while it obstructs his speed, offers a support rather than an obstacle to the practised swimmer.

Notwithstanding all these advantages, the strength of his impulses, and the numberless occasions on which he had breasted the surges of the Mediterranean, Sigismund, on recovering from his plunge, felt the fearful chances of the risk he ran, as the stern soldier meets the hazards of battle, in which he knows if there is victory, there is also death. He dashed the troubled water aside, though he swam blindly, and each stroke urged him further from the bark, his only hope of safety. He was between dark, rolling mounds, and, on rising to their summits, a hurricane of mist made him glad to sink again within a similar shelter. The breaking crests of the waves, which were glancing off in foam, also gave him great annoyance, for such was their force, that, more than once, he was hurled helpless as a log before them. Still he swam boldly, and with strength; nature having gifted him with more than the usual physical energy of man. But, uncertain in his course, unable to see the length of his own body, and pressed hard upon by the wind, even the spirit of Sigismund Steinbach could not long withstand so many adverse circumstances. He had already turned, wavering in purpose, thinking to catch a glimpse of the bark in the direction he had come, when a dark mass floated immediately before his eyes, and he felt the cold clammy nose of the dog, scenting about his face. The admirable instinct, or we might better say, the excellent training of Nettuno, told him that his services were not needed here, and, barking with wild delight, as if in mockery of the infernal din of the tempest, he sheered aside and swam swiftly on. A thought flashed like lightning on the brain of Sigismund. His best hope was in the inexplicable faculties of this animal. Throwing forward an arm, he seized the bushy tail of the dog, and suffered him-

self to be dragged ahead, he knew not whither, though he seconded the movement with his own exertions. Another bark proclaimed that the experiment was successful, and voices, rising as it were from the water, close at hand, announced the proximity of human beings. The brunt of the hurricane was past, and the washing of the waves, which had been stilled by the roar and the revelry of the winds, again became audible.

The strength of the two struggling old men was sinking fast. The Signor Grimaldi had thus far generously sustained his friend, who was less expert than himself in the water, and he continued to cheer him with a hope he did not feel himself, nobly refusing to the last to separate their fortunes.

"How dost find thyself, old Melchior," he asked. "Cheer thee, friend—I think there is succor at hand."

The water gurgled at the mouth of the Baron, who was near the gasp.

"'Tis late—bless thee, dearest Gaetano—God be with my child—my Adelheid—poor Adelheid!"

The utterance of this precious name under a father's agony of spirit, most probably saved his life. The sinewy arm of Sigismund, directed by the words, grasped his dress, and he felt at once that a new and preserving power had interposed between him and the caverns of the lake. It was time, for the water had covered the face of the failing Baron, ere the muscular arm of the youth came to perform its charitable office.

"Yield thee to the dog, signore," said Sigismund, clearing his mouth of water to speak calmly, once assured of his own burden; "trust to his sagacity, and,—God keep us in mind!—all may yet be well!"

The Signor Grimaldi retained sufficient presence of mind to follow this advice, and it was probably quite as fortunate that his friend had so far lost his consciousness, as to become an unresisting burden in the hands of Sigismund.

"*Nettuno!*—gallant *Nettuno!*" swept past them on the gale for the first time, the partial hushing of the winds permitting the clear call of Maso to reach so far. The sound directed the efforts of Sigismund, though the dog had swum steadily away the moment he had the Genoese in his grip, and with a certainty of manner that showed he was at no loss for a direction.

But Sigismund had taxed his powers too far. He, who could have buffeted an ordinary sea for hours, was now completely exhausted by the unwonted exertions, the deadening influence of the tempest, and the log-like weight of his burden. He would not desert the father of Adelheid, and yet each fainting and useless stroke told him to despair. The dog had already disappeared in the darkness, and he was even uncertain again of the true position of the bark. He prayed in agony for a single glimpse of the rocking masts and yards, or to catch one syllable of the cheering voice of Maso. But in both his wishes were vain. In place of the former, he had naught but the veiled misty light, that had come on with the hurricane ; and instead of the latter, his ears were filled with the washing of the waves and the roars of the gusts. The blasts now descended to the surface of the lake, and now went whirling and swelling upward, in a way to lead the listener to fancy that the viewless winds might for once be seen. For a single painful instant, in one of those disheartening moments of despair that will come over the stoutest, his hand was about to relinquish its hold on the Baron, and to make the last natural struggle for life ; but that fair modest picture of maiden loveliness and truth, which had so long haunted his waking hours and adorned his night-dreams, interposed to prevent the act. After this brief and fleeting weakness, the young man seemed endowed with new energy. He swam stronger, and with greater apparent advantage, than before.

"*Nettuno—gallant Nettuno!*"—again drove over him, bringing with it the chilling certainty that, turned from his course by the rolling of the water, he had thrown away these desperate efforts by taking a direction which led him from the bark. While there was the smallest appearance of success, no difficulties, of whatever magnitude, could entirely extinguish hope ; but when the dire conviction that he had been actually aiding, instead of diminishing, the danger, pressed upon Sigismund, he abandoned his efforts. The most he endeavored or hoped to achieve, was to keep his own head and that of his companion above the fatal element, while he answered the cry of Maso with a shout of despair.

"*Nettuno!—gallant Nettuno!*"—again flew past on the gale.

This cry might have been an answer, or it might merely be the Italian encouraging his dog to bear on the body

with which it was already loaded. Sigismund uttered a shout, which he felt must be the last. He struggled desperately, but in vain: the world and its allurements were vanishing from his thoughts, when a dark line whirled over him, and fell thrashing upon the very wave which covered his face. The instinctive grasp caught it, and the young soldier felt himself impelled ahead. He had seized the rope which the mariner had not ceased to throw, as the fisherman casts his line, and he was at the side of the bark before his confused faculties enabled him to understand the means employed for his rescue.

Maso took a hasty turn with the rope, and stooping forward, favored by the roll of the vessel, he drew the Baron de Willading upon deck. Watching his time, he repeated the experiment, always with admirable coolness and dexterity, placing Sigismund also in safety. The former was immediately dragged senseless to the centre of the bark, where he received those attentions that had just been eagerly offered to the Signor Grimaldi, and with the same happy results. But Sigismund motioned all away from himself, knowing that their cares were needed elsewhere. He staggered forward a few paces, and then, yielding to a complete exhaustion of his power, he fell at full length on the wet planks. He long lay panting, speechless, and unable to move, with a sense of death on his frame.

"*Nettuno! gallant Nettuno!*"—shouted the indefatigable Maso, still at his post on the gangway, whence he cast his rope with unchanging perseverance. The fitful winds, which had already played so many fierce antics that eventful night, sensibly lulled, and, giving one or two sighs, as if regretting that they were about to be curbed again by that almighty Master, from whose benevolent hands they had so furtively escaped, as suddenly ceased blowing. The yards creaked, swinging loosely above the crowded deck, and the dull washing of water filled the ear. To these diminished sounds were to be added the barking of the dog, who was still abroad in the darkness, and a struggling noise like the broken and smothered attempts of human voices. Although the time appeared an age to all who awaited the result, scarcely five minutes had elapsed since the accident occurred and the hurricane had reached them. There was still hope, therefore, for those who yet remained in the water. Maso felt the eager-

ness of one who had already been successful beyond his hopes, and, in his desire to catch some guiding signal, he leaned forward, till the rolling lake washed into his face.

"Ha ! gallant—gallant Nettuno !"

Men certainly spoke, and that near him. But the sounds resembled words uttered beneath a cover. The wind whistled, too, though but for a moment, and then it seemed to sail upward into the dark vault of the heavens. Nettuno barked audibly, and his master answered with another shout, for the sympathy of man in his kind is inextinguishable.

"My brave, my noble Nettuno !"

The stillness was now imposing, and Maso heard the dog growl. This ill-omened signal was undeniably followed by smothered voices. The latter became clearer, as if the mocking winds were willing that a sad exhibition of human frailty should be known, or, what is more probable, violent passion had awakened stronger powers of speech. This much the mariner understood.

"Loosen thy grasp, accursed Baptiste !"

"Wretch, loosen thine own !"

"Is God naught with thee !"

"Why dost throttle so, infernal Nicklaus ?"

"Thou wilt die damned !"

"Thou chokest—villain—pardon !—pardon !"

He heard no more. The merciful elements interposed to drown the appalling strife. Once or twice the dog howled, but the tempest came across the Lemán again in its might, as if the short pause had been made merely to take breath. The winds took a new direction ; and the bark, still held by its anchors, swung wide off from its former position, tending in toward the mountains of Savoy. During the first burst of this new blast, even Maso was glad to crouch to the deck, for millions of infinitely fine particles were lifted from the lake, and driven on with the atmosphere with a violence to take away his breath. The danger of being swept before the furious tide of the driving element was also an accident not impossible. When the lull returned, no exertion of his faculties could catch a single sound foreign to the proper character of the scene, such as the splash of the water, and the creaking of the long, swinging yards.

The mariner now felt a deep concern for his dog. He called to him until he grew hoarse, but fruitlessly. The

change of position, with the constant and varying drift of the vessel, had carried them beyond the reach of the human voice. More time was expended in summoning "Nettuno! gallant Nettuno!" than had been consumed in the passage of all the events which it has been necessary to our object to relate so minutely, and always with the same want of success. The mind of Maso was pitched to a degree far above the opinions and habits of those with whom his life brought him ordinarily in contact, but, as even fine gold will become tarnished by exposure to impure air, he had not entirely escaped the habitual weakness of the Italians of his class. When he found that no cry could recall his faithful companion, he threw himself upon the deck in a paroxysm of passion, tore his hair, and wept audibly.

"Nettuno! my brave, my faithful Nettuno!" he said. "What are all these to me, without thee! Thou alone lovedst me—thou alone hast passed with me, through fair and foul—through good and evil, without change, or wish for another master! When the pretended friend has been false, thou hast remained faithful! When others were sycophants thou wert never a flatterer!"

Struck with this singular exhibition of sorrow, the good Augustine, who until now, like all the others, had been looking to his own safety, or employed in restoring the exhausted, took advantage of the favorable change in the weather, and advanced with the language of consolation.

"Thou hast saved all our lives, bold mariner," he said, "and there are those in the bark who will know how to reward thy courage and skill. Forget then thy dog, and indulge in a grateful heart to Maria and the saints, that they have been our friends and thine in this exceeding jeopardy."

"Father, I have eaten with the animal—slept with the animal—fought, swum, and made merry with him, and I could now drown with him! What are thy nobles and their gold to me, without my dog? The gallant brute will die the death of despair, swimming about in search of the bark in the midst of the darkness, until even one of his high breed and courage must suffer his heart to burst."

"Christians have been called into the dread presence, unconfessed and unshrived, to-night; and we should bethink us of their souls, rather than indulge in this grief in

behalf of one that, however faithful, ends but an unreasoning and irresponsible existence."

All this was thrown away upon Maso, who crossed himself habitually at the allusion to the drowned, but who did not the less bewail the loss of his dog, whom he seemed to love, like the affection that David bore for Jonathan, with a love surpassing that of a woman. Perceiving that his counsel was useless, the good Augustine turned away, to kneel and offer up his own prayers of gratitude, and to bethink him of the dead.

"Nettuno! *povera, carissima bestia!*" continued Maso, "whither art thou swimming, in this infernal quarrel between the air and water? Would I were with thee, dog! No mortal shall ever share the love I bore thee, *povero Nettuno!*—I will never take another to my heart, like thee!"

The outbreking of Maso's grief was sudden, and it was brief in its duration. In this respect it might be likened to the hurricane that had just passed. Excessive violence, in both cases, appeared to bring its own remedy, for the irregular, fitful gusts from the mountains had already ceased, and were succeeded by a strong but steady gale from the north; and the sorrow of Maso soon ended its characteristic plaints, to take a more continued and even character.

During the whole of the foregoing scenes, the common passengers had crouched to the deck, partly in stupor, partly in superstitious dread, and much of the time, from a positive inability to move without incurring the risk of being driven from the defenceless vessel into the lake. But, as the wind diminished in force, and the motion of the bark became more regular, they rallied their senses, like men who had been in a trance, and one by one they rose to their feet. About this time Adelheid heard the sound of her father's voice, blessing her care, and consoling her sorrow. The north wind blew away the canopy of clouds, and the stars shone above the angry Lemman, bringing with them some such promise of divine aid as the pillar of fire afforded to the Israelites in their passage of the Red Sea. Such an evidence of returning peace brought renewed confidence. All in the bark, passengers as well as crew, took courage at the benignant signs, while Adelheid wept, in gratitude and joy, over the gray hairs of her father.

Maso had now obtained complete command of the

Winkelried, as much by the necessity of the case, as by the unrivalled skill and courage he had manifested during the fearful minutes of their extreme jeopardy. No sooner did he succeed in staying his own grief, than he called the people about him, and issued his orders for the new measures that had become necessary.

All who have ever been subject to their influence know that there is nothing more uncertain than the winds. Their fickleness has passed into a proverb ; but their inconstancy, as well as their power, from the fanning air to the destructive tornado, are to be traced to causes that are sufficiently clear, though hid in their nature from the calculations of our forethought. The tempest of the night was owing to the simple fact that a condensed and chilled column of air from the mountains had pressed upon the heated substratum of the lake, and the latter, after a long resistance, suddenly finding vent for its escape, had been obliged to let in the cataract from above. As in all extraordinary efforts, whether physical or moral, reaction would seem to be a consequence of excessive action, the currents of air, pushed beyond their proper limits, were now setting back again, like a tide on its reflux. This cause produced the northern gale that succeeded the hurricane.

The wind that came from off the shores of Vaud was steady and fresh. The barks of the Lemane are not constructed for beating to windward, and it might even have been questioned, whether the Winkelried would have borne her canvas against so heavy a breeze. Maso, however, appeared to understand himself thoroughly, and as he had acquired the influence which hardihood and skill are sure to obtain over doubt and timidity in situations of hazard, he was obeyed by all on board with submission, if not with zeal. No more was heard of the headsman or of his supposed agency in the storm ; and, as he prudently kept himself in the background, so as not to endanger a revival of the superstition of his enemies, he seemed entirely forgotten.

The business of getting the anchors occupied a considerable time, for Maso refused, now there existed no necessity for the sacrifice, to permit a yarn to be cut ; but, released from this hold on the water, the bark whirled away, and was soon drifting before the wind. The mariner was at the helm, and causing the head-sail to be loosened, he steered directly for the rocks of Savoy. This manœuvre

excited disagreeable suspicions in the minds of several on board, for the lawless character of their pilot had been more than suspected in the course of their short acquaintance, and the coast toward which they were furiously rushing was known to be iron bound, and in such a gale fatal to all who came rudely upon its rocks. Half an hour removed their apprehension. When near enough to the mountains to feel their deadening influence on the gale, the natural effect of the eddies formed by their resistance to the currents, he luffed-to and set his main-sail. Relieved by this wise precaution, the *Winkelried* now wore her canvas gallantly, and she dashed along the shore of Savoy with a foaming beak, shooting past ravine, valley, glen, and hamlet, as if sailing in air.

In less than an hour, St. Gingoulph, or the village through which the dividing line between the territories of Switzerland and those of the King of Sardinia passes, was abeam, and the excellent calculations of the sagacious Maso became still more apparent. He had foreseen another shift of wind, as the consequence of all this poise and counterpoise, and he was here met by the true breeze of the night. The last current came out of the gorge of the Valais, sullen, strong, and hoarse, bringing him, however, fairly to windward of his port. The *Winkelried* was cast in season, and when the gale struck her anew, her canvas drew fairly, and she walked out from beneath the mountains into the broad lake, like a swan obeying its instinct.

The passage across the width of the *Leman*, in that horn of the crescent and in such a breeze, required rather more than an hour. This time was occupied among the common herd in self-felicitations, and in those vain boastings that distinguish the vulgar who have escaped an imminent danger without any particular merit of their own. Among those whose spirits were better trained and more rebuked, there were attentions to the sufferers and deep thanksgivings, with the touching intercourse of the grateful and happy. The late scenes, and the fearful fate of the patron and Nicklaus Wagner, cast a shade upon their joy, but all inwardly felt that they had been snatched from the jaws of death.

Maso shaped his course by the beacon that still blazed in the grate of old Roger de Blonay. With his eye riveted on the luff of his sail, his hip bearing hard against the tiller, and a heart that relieved itself, from time to time,

with bitter sighs, he ruled the bark like a presiding spirit.

At length the black mass of the côtes of Vaud took more distinct and regular forms. Here and there, a tower or a tree betrayed its outlines against the sky, and then the objects on the margin of the lake began to stand out in gloomy relief from the land. Lights flared along the strand, and cries reached them from the shore. A dark shapeless pile stood directly athwart their watery path, and at the next moment it took the aspect of a ruined castle-like edifice. The canvas flapped and was handed, the Winkelried rose and set more slowly and with a gentler movement, and glided into the little, secure, artificial haven of La Tour de Peil. A forest of latine yards and low masts lay before them, but by giving the bark a rank sheer, Maso brought her to her berth, by the side of another lake craft, with a gentleness of collision that, as the mariners have it, would not have broken an egg.

A hundred voices greeted the travellers; for their approach had been seen and watched with intense anxiety. Fifty eager Vévaisans poured upon her deck in a noisy crowd the instant it was possible. Among others, a dark shaggy object bounded foremost. It leaped wildly forward, and Maso found himself in the embraces of Nettuno. A little later, when delight and more tempered feeling permitted examination, a lock of human hair was discovered entangled in the teeth of the dog, and the following week the bodies of Baptiste and the peasant of Berne were found still clinched in the desperate death-gripe, washed upon the shores of Vaud.

CHAPTER VIII.

“The moon is up; by Heaven a lovely eve!
Long streams of light o’er glancing waves expand;
Now lads on shore may sigh and maids believe:
Such be our fate when we return to land!”—BYRON.

THE approach of the Winkelried had been seen from Vévey throughout the afternoon and evening. The arrival of the Baron de Willading and his daughter was expected by many in the town, the rank and influence of the former

in the great canton rendering him an object of interest to more than those who felt affection for his person and respect for his upright qualities. Roger de Blonay had not been his only youthful friend, for the place contained another, with whom he was intimate by habit, if not from a community of those principles which are the best cement of friendships.

The officer charged with the especial supervision of the districts or circles, into which Berne had caused its dependent territory of Vaud to be divided, was termed a *bailli*, a title that our word bailiff will scarcely render, except as it may strictly mean a substitute for the exercise of authority that is the property of another, but which, from the want of a better term, we may be compelled occasionally to use. The *bailli*, or bailiff, of Vêvey was Peter Hofmeister, a member of one of those families of the *bürgerschaft*, or the municipal aristocracy of the canton, which found its institutions venerable, just, and, if one might judge from their language, almost sacred, simply because it had been in possession of certain exclusive privileges under their authority, that were not only comfortable in their exercise but fecund in other worldly advantages. This Peter Hofmeister was, in the main, a hearty, well-meaning, and somewhat benevolent person, but, living as he did under the secret consciousness that all was not as it should be, he pushed his opinions on the subject of vested interests, and on the stability of temporal matters, a little into extremes, pretty much on the same principle as that on which the engineer expends the largest portion of his art in fortifying the weakest point of a citadel, taking care that there shall be a constant flight of shot, great and small, across the most accessible of its approaches. By one of the exclusive ordinances of those times, in which men were glad to get relief from the violence and rapacity of the Baron and the satellite of the Prince, ordinances that it was the fashion of the day to term liberty, the family of Hofmeister had come into the exercise of a certain charge, or monopoly, that in truth had always constituted its wealth and importance, but of which it was accustomed to speak as forming its principal claim to the gratitude of the public, for duties that had been performed not only so well, but for so long a period, by an unbroken succession of patriots descended from the same stock. They who judged of the value attached to the possession of this

charge, by the animation with which all attempts to relieve them of the burden were repelled, must have been in error ; for, to hear their friends descant on the difficulties of the duties, of the utter impossibility that they should be properly discharged by any family that had not been in their exercise just one hundred and seventy-two years and a half, the precise period of the hard servitude of the Hofmeisters, and the rare merit of their self-devotion to the common good, it would seem that they were so many modern Curtii, anxious to leap into the chasm of uncertain and endless toil, to save the Republic from the ignorance and peculations of certain interested and selfish knaves, who wished to enjoy the same high trusts, for a motive so unworthy as that of their own particular advantage. This subject apart, however, and with a strong reservation in favor of the supremacy of Berne, on whom his importance depended, a better or a more philanthropic man than Peter Hofmeister would not have been easily found. He was a hearty laugh, a hard drinker, a common and peculiar failing of the age, a great respecter of the law, as was meet in one so situated, and a bachelor of sixty-eight, a time of life that, by referring his education to a period more remote by half a century, than that in which the incidents of our legend took place, was not at all in favor of any very romantic predilection in behalf of the rest of the human race. In short, the Herr Hofmeister was a bailiff, much as Balthazar was a headsman, on account of some peculiar merit or demerit (it might now be difficult to say which) of one of his ancestors, by the laws of the canton, and by the opinions of men. The only material difference between them was in the fact, that the one greatly enjoyed his station, while the other had but an indifferent relish for his trust.

When Roger de Blonay, by the aid of a good glass, had assured himself that the bark which lay off St. Saphorin, in the even tide, with yards a-cock-bill, and sails pendent in their picturesque drapery, contained a party of gentle travellers who occupied the stern, and saw by the plumes and robes that a female of condition was among them, he gave an order to prepare the beacon-fire, and descended to the port, in order to be in readiness to receive his friend. Here he found the bailiff, pacing the public promenade, which is washed by the limpid water of the lake, with the air of a man who had more on his mind than the daily

cares of office. Although the Baron de Blonay was a Vaudois, and looked upon all the functionaries of his country's conquerors with a species of hereditary dislike, he was by nature a man of mild and courteous qualities, and the meeting was, as usual, friendly in the externals, and of seeming cordiality. Great care was had by both to speak in the second person; on the part of the Vaudois, that it might be seen he valued himself as, at least, the equal of the representative of Berne, and, on that of the bailiff, in order to show that his office made him as good as the head of the oldest house in all that region.

"Thou expectest to see friends from Genf in yonder bark?" said the Herr Hofmeister, abruptly.

"And thou?"

"A friend, and one more than a friend," answered the bailiff evasively. "My advices tell me that Melchior de Willading will sojourn among us during the festival of the Abbaye, and secret notice has been sent that there will be another here who wishes to see our merry-making, without pretension to the honors that he might fairly claim."

"It is not rare for nobles of mark, and even princes, to visit us on these occasions, under feigned names and without the *éclat* of their rank; for the great, when they descend to follies, seldom like to bring their high condition within their influence."

"The wiser they. I have my own troubles with these accursed fooleries, for—it may be a weakness, but it is one that is official—I cannot help imagining that a bailiff cuts but a shabby figure before the people in the presence of so many gods and goddesses. To own to thee the truth, I rejoice that he who cometh, cometh as he doth. Hast letters of late date from Berne?"

"None; though report says there is like to be a change among some of those who fill public trusts."

"So much the worse!" growled the bailiff. "Is it to be expected that men who never did an hour's duty in a charge can acquit themselves like those who have, it might be said, sucked in practice with their mother's milk?"

"Aye; this is well enough for thee; but others say that even the Erlachs had a beginning."

"Himmel! Am I a heathen to deny this? As many beginnings as thou wilt, good Roger, but I like not thy ends. No doubt an Erlach is mortal like all of us, and

even a created being ; but a man is not a charge. Let the clay die, if thou wilt, but if thou wouldst have faithful or skilful servants, look to the true successor. But we will have none of this to-day. Hast many guests at Blonay?"

"Not one. I look for the company of Melchior de Willading and his daughter—and yet I like not the time ! There are evil signs playing about the high peaks and in the neighborhood of the Dents since the sun has set !"

"Thou art ever in a storm up in thy castle there ! The Leman was never more peaceable, and I should take it truly in evil part, were the rebellious lake to get into one of its fits of sudden anger with so precious a freight on its bosom."

"I do not think the Genfer See will regard even a bailiff's displeasure !" rejoined the Baron de Blonay, laughing. "I repeat it ; the signs are suspicious. Let us consult the watermen, for it may be well to send a light-pulling boat to bring the travellers to land."

Roger de Blonay and the bailiff walked toward the little earthen mole that partially protects the roadstead of Vévey, and which is forever foaming and forever washing away before the storms of winter, in order to consult some of those who were believed to be expert in detecting the symptoms that preceded any important changes of the atmosphere. The opinions were various. Most believed there would be a gust ; but, as the Winkelried was known to be a new and well-built bark, and none could tell how much beyond her powers she had been loaded by the cupidity of Baptiste, and as it was generally thought the wind would be as likely to bring her up to her haven as be against her, there appeared no sufficient reason for sending off the boat ; especially as it was believed the bark would be not only drier but safer than a smaller craft, should they be overtaken by the wind. This indecision, so common in cases of uncertainty, was the means of exposing Adelheid and her father to all those fearful risks they had just run.

When the night came on, the people of the town began to understand that the tempest would be grave to those who were obliged to encounter it, even in the best bark, on the Leman. The darkness added to the danger, for vessels had often run against the land by miscalculating their distances ; and the lights were shown along the strand, by order of the bailiff, who manifested an interest so unusual

in those on board the Winkelried, as to draw about them more than the sympathy that would ordinarily be felt for travellers in distress. Every exertion that the case admitted was made in their behalf, and the moment the state of the lake allowed, boats were sent off, in every probable direction, to their succor. But the Winkelreid was running along the coast of Savoy ere any ventured forth, and the search proved fruitless. When the rumor spread, however, that a sail was to be discerned coming out from under the wide shadow of the opposite mountains, and that it was steering for La Tour de Peil, a village with a far safer harbor than that of Vévey, and but an arrow's flight from the latter town, crowds rushed to the spot. The instant it was known that the missing party was in her, the travellers were received with cheers of delight and cries of hearty greeting.

The bailiff and Roger de Blonay hastened forward to receive the Baron de Willading and his friends, who were carried in a tumultuous and joyful manner into the old castle that adorns the port, and from which, in truth, the latter derives its name. The Bernois noble was too much affected with the scenes through which he had so lately passed, and with the strong and ungovernable tenderness of Adelheid, who had wept over him as a mother sobs over her recovered child, to exchange greetings with him of Vaud, in the hearty, cordial manner that ordinarily characterized their meetings. Still their peculiar habits shone through the restraint.

"Thou seest me just rescued from the fishes of thy Lemán, dear de Blonay," he said, squeezing the other's hand with emotion, as, leaning on his shoulder, they went into the château. "But for yonder brave youth, and as honest a mariner as ever floated on water, fresh or salt, all that is left of old Melchior de Willading would, at this moment, be of less value than the meanest *féré* in thy lake."

"God be praised that thou art as we see thee! We feared for thee, and boats are out at this moment in search of thy bark: but it has been wiser ordered. This brave young man, who, I see, is both a Swiss and a soldier, is doubly welcome among us—in the two characters just named, and as one that hath done thee and us so great a service."

Sigismund received the compliments which he so well

merited with modesty. The bailiff, however, not content with making the usual felicitations, whispered in his ear that a service like this, rendered to one of its most esteemed nobles, would not be forgotten by the Councils on a proper occasion.

"Thou art happily arrived, Herr Melchior," he then added, aloud; "come as thou wilt, floating or sailing in air. We have thee among us none the worse for the accident, and we thank God, as Roger de Blonay has just so well observed. Our Abbaye is like to be a gallant ceremony, for divers gentlemen of name are in town, and I hear of more that are pricking forward among the mountains from countries beyond the Rhine. Hadst thou no other companions in the bark but these I see around us?"

"There is another, and I wonder that he is not here! 'Tis a noble Genoese, that thou hast often heard me name, Sire de Blonay, as one that I love. Gaetano Grimaldi is a name familiar to thee, or the words of friendship have been uttered in an idle ear."

"I have heard so much of the Italian that I can almost fancy him an old and tried acquaintance. When thou first returnedst from the Italian wars, thy tongue was never weary of recounting his praises: it was Gaetano said this—Gaetano thought thus—Gaetano did that! Surely he is not of thy company?"

"He, and no other! A lucky meeting on the quay of Genf brought us together again after a separation of full thirty years, and as if Heaven had reserved its trials for the occasion, we have been made to go through the late danger in company. I had him in my arms in that fearful moment, Roger, when the sky, and the mountains, and all of earth, even to that dear girl, were fading, as I thought forever, from my sight,—he, that had already been my partner in so many risks, who had bled for me, watched for me, ridden for me, and did all other things that love could prompt for me, was brought by Providence to be my companion in the awful strait through which I have just passed!"

While the Baron was still speaking, his friend entered with the quiet and dignified mien he always maintained, when it was not his pleasure to throw aside the reserve of high station, or when he yielded to the torrent of feeling that sometimes poured through his southern temperament, in a way to unsettle the deportment of mere con-

vention. He was presented to Roger de Blonay and the bailiff, as the person just alluded to, and as the oldest and most tried of the friends of his introducer. His reception by the former was natural and warm, while the Herr Hofmeister was so particular in his professions of pleasure and respect, as to excite not only notice but surprise.

"Thanks, thanks, good Peterchen," said the Baron de Willading, for such was the familiar diminutive by which the bustling bailiff was usually addressed, by those who could take the liberty; "thanks, honest Peterchen; thy kindness to Gaetano is so much love shown to myself."

"I honor thy friends as thyself, Herr von Willading," returned the bailiff, "for thou hast a claim to the esteem of the *bürgerschaft* and all its servants; but the homage paid to the Signor Grimaldi is due on his own account. We are but poor Swiss, that dwell in the midst of wild mountains, little favored by the sun if ye will, and less known to the world; but we have our manners! A man that hath been intrusted with authority as long as I, were unfit for his trust did he not tell, as it might be by instinct, when he has those in his presence that are to be honored. Signore, the loss of Melchior von Willading before our haven, would have made the lake unpleasant to us all for months, not to say years; but had so great a calamity arrived as that of your death by means of our waters, I could have prayed that the mountains might fall into the basin, and bury the offending Lemman under their rocks!"

Melchior de Willading and old Roger de Blonay laughed heartily at Peterchen's hyperbolical compliments; though it was quite plain that the worthy bailiff himself fancied he had said a clever thing.

"I thank you, signore, no less than my friend de Willading," returned the Genoese, a gleam of humor lighting his eye. "This courteous reception quite outdoes us of Italy; for I doubt if there be a man south of the Alps, who would be willing to condemn either of our seas to so overwhelming a punishment for a fault so venial, or at least so natural. I beg, however, that the lake may be pardoned; since, at the worst, it was but a secondary agent in the affair, and I doubt not it would have treated us as it treats all travellers, had we kept out of its embraces. The crime must be imputed to the winds, and as they are the off-

spring of the hills, I fear it will be found that these very mountains, to which you look for retribution, will be convicted at last as the true devisers and abettors of the plot against our lives."

The bailiff chuckled and simpered like a man pleased equally with his own wit and with that he had excited in others, and the discourse changed; though throughout the night, as indeed was the fact on all other occasions during his visit, the Signor Grimaldi received from him so marked and particular attentions, as to create a strong sentiment in favor of the Italian among those who had been chiefly accustomed to see Peterchen enact the busy, important, dignified, local functionary.

Attention was now paid to the first wants of the travelers, who had great need of refreshments after the fatigues and exposure of the day. To obtain the latter, Roger de Blonay insisted that they should ascend to his castle, in whose grate the welcome beacon still blazed. By means of *chars-à-banc*, the peculiar vehicle of the country, the short distance was soon overcome, the bailiff, not a little to the surprise of the owner of the house, insisting on seeing the strangers safely housed within its walls. At the gate of Blonay, however, Peterchen took his leave, making a hundred apologies for his absence, on the ground of the extensive duties that had devolved on his shoulders in consequence of the approaching fête.

"We shall have a mild winter, for I have never known the Herr Hofmeister so courteous," observed Roger de Blonay, while showing his guests into the castle. "Thy Bernese authorities, Melchior, are little apt to be lavish of their compliments to us poor nobles of Vaud."

"Signore, you forget the interest of our friend," observed the laughing Genoese. "There are other and better bailiwicks, beyond a question, in the gift of the Councils, and the Signor de Willading has a loud voice in their disposal. Have I found a solution for this zeal?"

"Thou hast not," returned the Baron, "for Peterchen hath little hope beyond that of dying where he has lived, the deputed ruler of a small district. The worthy man should have more credit for a good heart, his own no doubt being touched at seeing those who are, as it may be, redeemed from the grave. I owe him grace for the kindness, and should a better thing really offer, and could my poor voice be of account, why, I do not say it should be

silent; it is serving the public well to put men of these kind feelings into places of trust."

This opinion appeared very natural to the listeners, all of whom, with the exception of the Signor Grimaldi, joined in echoing the sentiment. The latter, more experienced in the windings of the human heart, or possessing some reasons known only to himself, merely smiled at the remarks that he heard, as if he thoroughly understood the difference between the homage that is paid to station, and that which a generous and noble nature is compelled to yield to its own impulses.

An hour later, the light repast was ended, and Roger de Blonay informed his guests that they would be well repaid for walking a short distance, by a look at the loveliness of the night. In sooth, the change was already so great that it was not easy for the imagination to convert the soft and smiling scene that lay beneath and above the towers of Blonay, into the dark vault and the angry lake from which they had so lately escaped.

Every cloud had already sailed far away toward the plains of Germany, and the moon had climbed so high above the ragged Dent de Jaman as to suffer its rays to stream into the basin of the Lemane. A thousand pensive stars spangled the vault, images of the benign omnipotence which unceasingly pervades and governs the universe, whatever may be the local derangements or accidental struggles of the inferior agents. The foaming and rushing waves had gone down nearly as fast as they had arisen, and in their stead, remained myriads of curling ridges along which the glittering moonbeams danced, rioting with wild impunity on the surface of the placid sheet. Boats were out again, pulling for Savoy or the neighboring villages; and the whole view betokened the renewed confidence of those who trusted habitually to the fickle and blustering elements.

"There is a strong and fearful resemblance between the human passions and these hot and angry gusts of nature," observed the Signor Grimaldi, after they had stood silently regarding the scene for several musing minutes, "alike quick to be aroused and to be appeased; equally ungovernable while in the ascendant, and admitting the influence of a wholesome reaction, that brings a more sober tranquillity when the fit is over. Your northern phlegm may render the analogy less apparent, but it is to be found as

well among the cooler temperaments of the Teutonic stock, as among us of warmer blood. Do not this placid hill-side, yon lake, and the starry heavens look as if they regretted their late unseemly violence, and wished to cheat the beholder into forgetfulness of their attack on our safety, as an impetuous but generous nature would repent it of the blow given in anger, or of the cutting speech that had escaped in a moment of spleen? What hast thou to say to my opinion, Signor Sigismund, for none know better than thou the quality of the tempest we have encountered?"

"Signore," answered the young soldier, modestly, "you forget this brave mariner, without whose coolness and forethought all would have been lost. He has come up to Blonay at our own request, but until now he has been overlooked."

Maso came forward at a signal from Sigismund, and stood before the party to whom he had rendered so signal aid, with a composure that was not easily disturbed.

"I have come up to the castle, signore, at your commands," he said, addressing the Genoese; "but, having my own affairs on hand, must now beg to know your pleasure?"

"We have, in sooth, been negligent of thy merit. On landing, my first thought was of thee, as thou knowest; but other things had caused me to forget thee. Thou art, like myself, an Italian?"

"Signore, I am."

"Of what country?"

"Of your own, signore; a Genoese, as I have said before."

The other remembered the circumstance, though it did not seem to please him. He looked around, as if to detect what others thought, and then continued his questions.

"A Genoese!" he repeated slowly: "if this be so, we should know something of each other. Hast ever heard of me, in thy frequent visits to the port?"

Maso smiled; at first he appeared disposed to be facetious; but a dark cloud passed over his swarthy lineaments, and he lost his pleasantry, in an air of thoughtfulness that struck his interrogator as singular.

"Signore," he said, after a pause, "most that follow my manner of life know something of your Eccellenza; if it is only to be questioned of this that I am here, I pray leave to be permitted to go my way."

"No, by San Francesco! thou quittest us not so unceremoniously. I am wrong to assume the manner of a superior with one to whom I owe my life, and am well answered. But there is a heavy account to be settled between us, and I will do something toward wiping out the balance, which is so greatly against me now; leaving thee to apply for a further statement when we shall both be again in our own Genoa."

The Signor Grimaldi had reached forth an arm, while speaking, and received a well-filled purse from his countryman and companion, Marcelli. This was soon emptied of its contents, a fair show of sequins, all of which were offered to the mariner without reservation. Maso looked coldly at the glittering pile, and by his hesitation, left a doubt whether he did not think the reward insufficient.

"I can tell thee it is but the present gage of further payment. At Gênoa our account shall be fairly settled; but this is all that a traveller can prudently spare. Thou wilt come to me in our own town, and we will look to all thy interests."

"Signore, you offer that for which men do all acts, whether of good or of evil. They jeopard their souls for this very metal; mock at God's laws; overlook the right; trifle with justice, and become devils incarnate to possess it; and yet, though nearly penniless, I am so placed as to be compelled to refuse what you offer."

"I tell thee, Maso, that it shall be increased hereafter—or—we are not so poor as to go a-begging! Good Marcelli, empty thy hoards, and I will have recourse to Melchior de Willading's purse for our wants, until we can get nearer to our own supplies."

"And is Melchior de Willading to pass for nothing, in all this!" exclaimed the Baron; "put up thy gold, Gaetano, and leave me to satisfy the honest mariner for the present. At a later day, he can come to thee, in Italy; but here, on my own ground, I claim the right to be his banker."

"Signore," returned Maso, earnestly, and with more of gentle feeling than he was accustomed to betray, "you are both liberal beyond my desires, and but too well disposed for my poor wants. I have come up to the castle at your order, and to do you pleasure, but not in the hope to get money. I am poor; that it would be useless to deny, for appearances are against me"—here he laughed,

his auditors thought in a manner that was forced—"but poverty and meanness are not always inseparable. You have more than suspected to-day that my life is free, and I admit it; but it is a mistake to believe that, because men quit the high-road which some call honesty, in any particular practice, they are without human feeling. I have been useful in saving your lives, signori, and there is more pleasure in the reflection, than I should find in having the means to earn twice the gold ye offer. Here is the signor capitano," he added, taking Sigismund by the arm, and dragging him forward, "lavish your favors on him, for no practice of mine could have been of use without his bravery. If ye give him all in your treasuries, even to its richest pearl, ye will do no more than reason."

As Maso ceased, he cast a glance towards the attentive, breathless Adelheid, that continued to utter his meaning even after the tongue was silent. The bright suffusion that covered the maiden's face was visible even by the pale moonlight, and Sigismund shrank back from his rude grasp in the manner in which the guilty retire from notice.

"These opinions are creditable to thee, Maso," returned the Genoese, affecting not to understand his more particular meaning, "and they excite a stronger wish to be thy friend. I will say no more on the subject at present, for I see thy humor. Thou wilt let me see thee at Genoa?"

The expression of Maso's countenance was inexplicable, but he retained his usual indifference of manner.

"Signor Gaetano," he said, using a mariner's freedom in the address, "there are nobles in Genoa that might better knock at the door of your palace than I; and there are those, too, in the city, that would gossip. were it known that you received such guests."

"This is tying thyself too closely to an evil and a dangerous trade. I suspect thee to be of the contraband, but surely it is not a pursuit so free from danger, of so much repute, or, judging by thy attire, of so much profit even, that thou needest be wedded to it for life. Means can be found to relieve thee from its odium, by giving thee a place in those customs with which thou hast so often trifled."

Maso laughed outright.

"So it is, signore, in this moral world of ours; he who would run a fair course in any particular trust has only to make himself dangerous to be bought up. Your thief-

takers are desperate rogues out of business ; your tide-waiter has got his art by cheating the revenue ; and I have been in lands where it was said that all they who most fleeced the people began their calling as suffering patriots. The rule is firmly enough established without the help of my poor name, and by your leave, I will remain as I am ; one that hath his pleasure in living amid risks, and who takes his revenge of the authorities by railing at them when defeated, and by laughing at them when in success."

"Young man, thou hast in thee the materials of a better life !"

"Signore, this may be true," answered Maso, whose countenance again grew dark ; "we boast of being the lords of the creation, but the bark of poor Baptiste was not less master of its movements, in the late gust, than we are masters of our fortunes. Signor Grimaldi, I have in me the materials that make a man ; but the laws, and the opinions, and the accursed strife of men have left me what I am. For the first fifteen years of my career, the church was to be my stepping-stone to a cardinal's hat, or a fat priory ; but the briny sea-water washed out the necessary unction."

"Thou art better born than thou seemest—thou hast friends who should be grieved at this ?"

The eye of Maso flashed, but he bent it aside, as if bearing down, by the force of an indomitable will, some sudden and fierce impulse.

"I was born of woman !" he said, with singular emphasis.

"And thy mother—is she not pained at thy present course—does she know of thy career ?"

The haggard smile to which this question gave birth induced the Genoese to regret that he had put it. Maso evidently struggled to subdue some feeling which harrowed his very soul, and his success was owing to such a command of himself as men rarely obtain.

"She is dead," he answered, huskily ; "she is a saint with the angels. Had she lived, I should never have been a mariner, and—and—" laying his hand on his throat, as if to keep down the sense of suffocation, he smiled, and added, laughingly,—"*aye*, and the good Winkelried would have been a wreck."

"Maso, thou must come to me at Genoa. I must see more of thee, and question thee further of thy fortunes

A fair spirit has been perverted in thy fall, and the friendly aid of one who is not without influence may still restore its tone."

The Signor Grimaldi spoke warmly, like one who sincerely felt regret, and his voice had all the melancholy and earnestness of such a sentiment. The truculent nature of Maso was touched by the show of interest, and a multitude of fierce passions were at once subdued. He approached the noble Genoese, and respectfully took his hand.

"Pardon the freedom, signore," he said more mildly, intently regarding the wrinkled and attenuated fingers, with the map-like tracery of veins, that he held in his own brown and hard palm; "this is not the first time that our flesh has touched each other, though it is the first time that our hands have joined. Let it now be in amity. A humor has come over me, and I would crave your pardon, venerable noble, for the freedom. Signore, you are aged, and honored, and stand high, doubtless, in Heaven's favor, as in that of man—grant me, then, your blessing, ere I go my way."

As Maso preferred this extraordinary request, he knelt with an air of so much reverence and sincerity as to leave little choice as to granting it. The Genoese was surprised, but not disconcerted. With perfect dignity and self-possession, and with a degree of feeling that was not unsuited to the occasion, the fruit of emotions so powerfully awakened, he pronounced the benediction. The mariner arose, kissed the hand which he still held, made a hurried sign of salutation to all, leaped down the declivity on which they stood, and vanished among the shadows of a copse.

Sigismund, who had witnessed this unusual scene with surprise, watched him to the last, and he saw, by the manner in which he dashed his hand across his eyes, that his fierce nature had been singularly shaken. On recovering his thoughts, the Signor Grimaldi, too, felt certain there had been no mockery in the conduct of their inexplicable preserver, for a hot tear had fallen on his hand ere it was liberated. He was himself strongly agitated by what had passed, and leaning on his friend, he slowly re-entered the gate of Blonay.

"This extraordinary demand of Maso's has brought up the sad image of my own poor son, dear Melchior," he said; "would to Heaven that he could have received this blessing, and that it might have been of use to him, in

the sight of God ! Nay, he may yet hear it—for, canst thou believe it, I have thought that Maso may be one of his lawless associates, and that some wild desire to communicate this scene has prompted the strange request. I granted."

The discourse continued, but it became secret, and of the most confidential kind. The rest of the party soon sought their beds, though lamps were burning in the chambers of the two old nobles to a late hour of the night.

CHAPTER IX.

"Where are my Switzers ? Let them guard the door : What is the matter ?"

—*Hamlet.*

THE American autumn, or fall, as we poetically and affectionately term this generous and mellow season among ourselves, is thought to be unsurpassed, in its warm and genial lustre, its bland and exhilarating airs, and its admirable constancy, by the decline of the year in nearly every other portion of the earth. Whether attachment to our own fair and generous land has led us to over-estimate its advantages or not, and bright and cheerful as our autumnal days certainly are, a fairer morning never dawned upon the Alleghanies than that which illumed the Alps, on the reappearance of the sun after the gust of the night which has been so lately described. As the day advanced, the scene grew gradually more lovely, until warm and glowing Italy itself could scarcely present a landscape more winning, or one possessing a fairer admixture of the grand and the soft, than that which greeted the eye of Adelheid de Willading, as, leaning on the arm of her father, she issued from the gate of Blonay upon its elevated and gravelled terrace.

It has already been said that this ancient and historical building stood against the bosom of the mountains, at the distance of a short league behind the town of Vévey. All the elevations of this region are so many spurs of the same vast pile, and that on which Blonay has now been seated from the earliest period of the middle ages belongs to that peculiar line of rocky ramparts which separates the Valais from the centre cantons of the confederation of Switzer-

land, and which is commonly known as the range of the Oberland Alps. This line of snow-crowned rocks terminates in perpendicular precipices on the very margin of the Lemman, and forms, on the side of the lake, a part of that magnificent setting which renders the southeastern horn of its crescent so wonderfully beautiful. The upright natural wall that overhangs Villeneuve and Chillon stretches along the verge of the water, barely leaving room for a carriage-road, with here and there a cottage at its base, for the distance of two leagues, when it diverges from the course of the lake, and withdrawing inland, it is finally lost among the minor eminences of Fribourg. Every one has observed those sloping declivities, composed of the washing of torrents, the *débris* of precipices, and what may be termed the constant drippings of perpendicular eminences, and which lie like broad buttresses at their feet, forming a sort of foundation or basement for the superincumbent mass. Among the Alps, where nature has acted on so sublime a scale, and where all the proportions are duly observed, these *débris* of the high mountains frequently contain villages and towns, or form vast fields, vineyards, and pasturages, according to their elevation or their exposure toward the sun. It may be questioned, in strict geology, whether the variegated acclivity that surrounds Vévey, rich in villages and vines, hamlets and castles, has been thus formed, or whether the natural convulsions which expelled the upper rocks from the crust of the earth left their bases in the present broken and beautiful forms; but the fact is not important to the effect, which is that just named, and which gives rise to these vast ranges of rock secondary and fertile bases, that, in other regions, would be termed mountains of themselves.

The castle and family of Blonay, for both still exist, are among the oldest of Vaud. A square, rude tower, based upon a foundation of rock, one of those ragged masses that thrust their naked heads occasionally through the soil of the declivity, was the commencement of the hold. Other edifices have been reared around this nucleus in different ages, until the whole presents one of those peculiar and picturesque piles, that ornament so many both of the savage and of the softer sites of Switzerland.

The terrace toward which Adelheid and her father advanced was an irregular walk, shaded by venerable trees that had been raised near the principal or the carriage gate

of the castle, on a ledge of those rocks that form the foundation of the buildings themselves. It had its parapet walls, its seats, its artificial soil, and its graveled *allées*, as is usual with these antiquated ornaments ; but it also had, what is better than these, one of the most sublime and lovely views that ever greeted human eyes. Beneath it lay the undulating and teeming declivity, rich in vines, and carpeted with sward, here dotted by hamlets, there park-like and rural with forest trees, while there was no quarter that did not show the roof of a château or the tower of some rural church. There is little of magnificence in Swiss architecture, which never much surpasses, and is, perhaps, generally inferior to our own ; but the beauty and quaintness of the sites, the great variety of the surfaces, the hillsides, and the purity of the atmosphere, supply charms that are peculiar to this country. Vévey lay at the water-side, many hundred feet lower, and seemingly on a narrow strand, though in truth enjoying ample space ; while the houses of St. Saphorin, Corsier, Montreux, and of a dozen more villages, were clustered together, like so many of the compact habitations of wasps stuck against the mountains. But the principal charm was in the *Leman*. One who had never witnessed the lake in its fury, could not conceive the possibility of danger in the tranquil shining sheet that was now spread like a liquid mirror, for leagues beneath the eye. Some six or seven barks were in view, their sails drooping in negligent forms, as if disposed expressly to become models for the artist, their yards inclining as chance had cast them, and their hulls looming large, to complete the picture. To these near objects must be added the distant view, which extended to the Jura in one direction, and which in the other was bounded by the frontiers of Italy, whose aerial limits were to be traced in that region which appears to belong neither to heaven nor to earth, the abode of eternal frosts. The Rhone was shining, in spots, among the meadows of the Valais, for the elevation of the castle admitted of its being seen, and Adelheid endeavored to trace among the mazes of the mountains the valleys which led to those sunny countries, toward which they journeyed.

The sensations of both father and daughter, when they came beneath the leafy canopy of the terrace, were those of mute delight. It was evident, by the expression of their countenances, that they were in a favorable mood to

receive pleasurable impressions ; for the face of each was full of that quiet happiness which succeeds sudden and lively joy. Adelheid had been weeping ; but, judging from the radiance of her eyes, the healthful and brightening bloom of her cheeks, and the struggling smiles that played about her ripe lips, the tears had been sweet, rather than painful. Though still betraying enough of physical frailty to keep alive the concern of all who loved her, there was a change for the better in her appearance, which was so sensible as to strike the least observant of those who lived in daily communication with the invalid.

"If pure and mild air, a sunny sky, and ravishing scenery, be what they see who cross the Alps, my father," said Adelheid, after they had stood a moment, gazing at the magnificent panorama, "why should the Swiss quit his native land ? Is there in Italy aught more soft, more winning, or more healthful than this ?"

"This spot has often been called the Italy of our mountains. The fig ripens near yonder village of Montreux, and, open to the morning sun while it is sheltered by the precipices above, the whole of that shore well deserves its happy reputation. Still they whose spirits require diversion, and whose constitutions need support, generally prefer to go into countries where the mind has more occupation, and where a greater variety of employments help the climate and nature to complete the cure."

"But thou forgettest, father, it is agreed between us that I am now to become strong, and active, and laughing, as we used to be at Willading, when I first grew into womanhood."

"If I could but see those days again, darling, my own closing hours would be calm as those of a saint—though Heaven knows I have little pretension to that blessed character in any other particular."

"Dost thou not count a quiet conscience and a sure hope as something, father ?"

"Have it as thou wilt, girl. Make a saint of me, or a bishop, or a hermit, if thou wilt ; the only reward I ask is, to see thee smiling and happy, as thou never failedst to be during the first eighteen years of thy life. Had I foreseen that thou wert to return from my good sister so little like thyself, I would have forbidden the visit, much as I love her, and all that are hers. But the wisest of us are helpless mortals, and scarce know our wants from hour

to hour. Thou saidst, I think, that this brave Sigismund honestly declared his belief that my consent could never be given to one who had so little to boast of, in the way of birth and fortune? There was, at least, good sense, and modesty, and right feeling, in the doubt, but he should have thought better of my heart."

"He said this," returned Adelheid, in a timid and slightly trembling voice, though it was quite apparent, by the confiding expression of her eye, that she had no longer any secret from her parent. "He had too much honor to wish to win the daughter of a noble without the knowledge and approbation of her friends."

"That the boy should love thee, Adelheid, is natural; it is an additional proof of his own merit—but that he should distrust my affection and justice is an offence that I can scarce forgive. What are ancestry and wealth to thy happiness?"

"Thou forget'st, dear sir, he is yet to learn that my happiness, in any measure, depends on his."

Adelheid spoke quickly and with warmth.

"He knew I was a father, and that thou art an only child; one of his good sense and right way of thinking should have better understood the feelings of a man in my situation, than to doubt his natural affection."

"As he has never been the parent of an only daughter, father," answered the smiling Adelheid, for, in her present mood, smiles came easily, "he may not have felt or anticipated all that thou imagin'st. He knew the prejudices of the world on the subject of noble blood, and they are few, indeed, that, having much, are disposed to part with it to him who hath little."

"The lad reasoned more like an old miser than a young soldier, and I have a great mind to let him feel my displeasure for thinking so meanly of me. Have we not Willading, with all its fair lands, besides our rights in the city, that we need go begging money of others, like needy mendicants! Thou hast been in the conspiracy against my character, girl, or such a fear could not have given either uneasiness for a moment."

"I never thought, father, that thou wouldst reject him on account of poverty, for I knew our own means sufficient for all our wants; but I did believe that he who could not boast the privileges of nobility might fail to gain thy favor."

"Are we not a republic?—is not the right of the *bürgerschaft* the one essential right in Berne—why should I raise obstacles about that on which the laws are silent?"

Adelheid listened, as a female of her years would be apt to listen to words so grateful, with a charmed ear; and yet she shook her head, in a way to express an incredulity that was not altogether free from apprehension.

"For thy generous forgetfulness of old opinions in behalf of my happiness, dearest father," she resumed, the tears starting unbidden to her thoughtful blue eye, "I thank thee fervently. It is true that we are inhabitants of a republic, but we are not the less noble."

"Dost thou turn against thyself, and hunt up reasons why I should not do that which thou hast just acknowledged to be so necessary to prevent thee from following thy brothers and sisters to their early graves?"

The blood rushed in a torrent to the face of Adelheid, for though, weeping and in the moment of tender confidence which succeeded her thanksgivings for the Baron's safety, she had thrown herself on his bosom, and confessed that the hopelessness of the sentiments with which she met the declared love of Sigismund was the true cause of the apparent malady that had so much alarmed her friends, the words that had flowed spontaneously from her heart, in so tender a scene, had never appeared to her to convey a meaning so strong, or one so wounding to virgin pride, as that which her father, in the strength of his masculine habits, had now given them.

"In God's mercy, father, I shall live, whether united to Sigismund or not, to smooth thine own decline and to bless thy old age. A pious daughter will never be torn so cruelly from one to whom she is the last and only stay. I may mourn this disappointment, and foolishly wish, perhaps, it might have been otherwise; but ours is not a house of which the maidens die for their inclinations in favor of any youths, however deserving!"

"Noble or simple," added the Baron, laughing, for he saw that his daughter spoke in sudden pique, rather than from her excellent heart. Adelheid, whose good sense, and quick recollections instantly showed her the weakness of this little display of female feeling, laughed faintly in her turn, though she repeated his words as if to give still more emphasis to her own.

"This will not do, my daughter. They who profess the republican doctrine should not be too rigid in their constructions of privileges. If Sigismund be not noble, it will not be difficult to obtain for him that honorable distinction, and in failure of main line, he may bear the name and sustain the honors of our family. In any case he will become of the *bürgerschaft*, and that of itself will be all that is required in Berne."

"In Berne, father," returned Adelheid, who had so far forgotten the recent movement of pride as to smile on her fond and indulgent parent, though, yielding to the waywardness of the happy, she continued to trifle with her own feelings—"it is true. The *bürgerschaft* will be sufficient for all the purposes of office and political privileges, but will it suffice for the opinions of our equals, for the prejudices of society, or for your own perfect contentment, when the freshness of gratitude shall have passed?"

"Thou puttest these questions, girl, as if employed to defeat thine own cause. Dost not truly love the boy, after all?"

"On this subject, I have spoken sincerely and as became thy child," frankly returned Adelheid. "He saved my life from imminent peril, as he has now saved thine, and although my aunt, fearful of thy displeasure, would not that thou shouldst hear the tale, her prohibition could not prevent gratitude from having its way. I have told thee that Sigismund has declared his feelings, although he nobly abstained from even asking a return, and I should not have been my mother's child, could I have remained entirely indifferent to so much worth united to a service so great. What I have said of our prejudices is, then, rather for your reflection, dearest sir, than for myself. I have thought much of all this, and am ready to make any sacrifice to pride, and to bear all the remarks of the world, in order to discharge a debt to one to whom I owe so much. But, while it is natural, perhaps unavoidable, that I should feel thus, thou art not necessarily to forget the other claims upon thee. It is true that, in one sense, we are all to each other, but there is a tyrant that will scarcely let any escape from his reign; I mean opinion. Let us not then deceive ourselves—though we of Berne affect the republic, and speak much of liberty, it is a small state, and the influence of those that are larger and more powerful among our neighbors rules in everything that touches opinion. A

noble is as much a noble in Berne, in all but what the law bestows, as he is in the Empire—and thou knowest we come of the German root, which has struck deep into these prejudices.”

The Baron de Willading had been much accustomed to defer to the superior mind and more cultivated understanding of his daughter, who, in the retirement of her father's castle, had read and reflected far more than her years would have probably permitted in the busier scenes of the world. He felt the justice of her remark, and they had walked the entire length of the terrace in profound silence, before he could summon the ideas necessary to make a suitable answer.

“The truth of what thou sayest is not to be denied,” he at length said, “but it may be palliated. I have many friends in the German courts, and favors may be had; letters of nobility will give the youth the station he wants, after which he can claim thy hand without offence to any opinions, whether of Berne or elsewhere.”

“I doubt if Sigismund will willingly become a party to this expedient. Our own nobility is of ancient origin; it dates from a period anterior to the existence of Berne as a city, and is much older than our institutions. I remember to have heard him say, that when a people refused to bestow these distinctions themselves, their citizens can never receive them from others without a loss of dignity and character, and one of his moral firmness might hesitate to do what he thinks wrong for a boon so worthless as that we offer.”

“By the soul of William Tell! should the unknown peasant dare——But he is a brave boy, and twice has he done the last service to my race! I love him, Adelheid, little less than thyself; and we will win him over to our purpose gently, and by degrees. A maiden of thy beauty and years, to say nothing of thy other qualities, thy name, the lands of Willading, and the rights of Berne, are matters after all not to be lightly refused by a nameless soldier who hath naught——”

“But his courage, his virtues, his modesty, and his excellent sense, father!”

“Thou wilt not let me have the naked satisfaction of vaunting my own wares! I see Gaetano Grimaldi making signs at his window, as if he were about to come forth; go thou to thy chamber, that I may discourse of this trouble-

some matter with that excellent friend ; in good season thou shalt know the result."

Adelheid kissed the hand that she held in her own, and left him with a thoughtful air. As she descended from the terrace, it was not with the same elastic step as she had come up half an hour before.

Early deprived of her mother, this strong-minded but delicate girl had long been accustomed to make her father a confidant of all her hopes, thoughts, and pictures of the future. Owing to her peculiar circumstances, she would have had less hesitation than is usual to her sex in avowing to her parent any of her attachments ; but a dread that the declaration might conduce to his unhappiness, without in any manner favoring her own cause, had hitherto kept her silent. Her acquaintance with Sigismund had been long and intimate. Rooted esteem and deep respect lay at the bottom of her sentiments, which were, however, so lively as to have chased the rose from her cheek in the endeavor to forget them, and to have led her sensitive father to apprehend that she was suffering under that premature decay which had already robbed him of his other children. There was in truth no serious ground for this apprehension, so natural to one in the place of the Baron de Willading ; for, until thought and reflection paled her cheek, a more blooming maiden than Adelheid, or one that united more perfect health with feminine delicacy, did not dwell among her native mountains. She had quietly consented to the Italian journey, in the expectation that it might serve to divert her mind from brooding over what she had long considered hopeless, and with the natural desire to see lands so celebrated, but not under any mistaken opinions of her own situation. The presence of Sigismund, so far as she was concerned, was purely accidental, although she could not prevent the pleasing idea from obtruding—an idea so grateful to her womanly affections and maiden pride—that the young soldier, who was in the service of Austria, and who had become known to her in one of his frequent visits to his native land, had gladly seized this favorable occasion to return to his colors. Circumstances, which it is not necessary to recount, had enabled Adelheid to make the youth acquainted with her father, though the interdictions of her aunt, whose imprudence had led to the accident which nearly proved so fatal, and from whose consequences she had been saved by Sigismund, prevented

her from explaining all the causes she had for showing him respect and esteem. Perhaps the manner in which this young and imaginative though sensible girl was compelled to smother a portion of her feelings gave them intensity, and hastened that transition of sentiment from gratitude to affection, which, in another case, might have only been produced by a more open and prolonged association. As it was, she scarcely knew herself how irretrievably her happiness was bound up in that of Sigismund, though she had so long cherished his image in most of her day-dreams, and had unconsciously admitted his influence over her mind and hopes, until she learned that they were reciprocated.

The Signor Grimaldi appeared on one end of the terrace as Adelheid de Willading descended at the other. The old nobles had separated late on the previous night, after a private and confidential communication that had shaken the soul of the Italian, and drawn strong and sincere manifestations of sympathy from his friend. Though so prone to sudden shades of melancholy, there was a strong touch of the humorous in the native character of the Genoese, which came so quick upon his more painful recollections, as greatly to relieve their weight, and to render him, in appearance at least, a happy, while the truth would have shown that he was a sorrowing man. He had been making his orisons with a grateful heart, and he now came forth into the genial mountain air like one who had relieved his conscience of a heavy debt. Like most laymen of the Catholic persuasion, he thought himself no longer bound to maintain a grave and mortified exterior, when worship and penitence were duly observed, and he joined his friend with a cheerfulness of air and voice that an ascetic or a puritan might have attributed to levity, after the scenes through which he had so lately passed.

"The Virgin and San Francesco keep thee in mind, old friend!" said the Signor Grimaldi, cordially kissing the two cheeks of the Baron de Willading. "We both have reason to remember their care, though, heretic as thou art, I doubt not that thou hast already found some other mediators to thank, that we now stand on this solid terrace of the Signor de Blonay, instead of being worthless clay at the bottom of yonder treacherous lake."

"I thank God for this, as for all his mercies—for thy life, Gaetano, as well as for mine own."

"Thou art right, thou art right, good Melchior. 'twas no affair for any but Him who holds the universe in the hollow of His hand, in good faith, for a minute later would have gathered both with our fathers. Still thou wilt permit me, Catholic as I am, to remember the intercessors on whom I called in the moment of extremity."

"This is a subject on which we have never agreed, and on which we probably never shall," answered the Bernese, with somewhat of the reserve of one conscious of a stronger dissidence than he wished to express, as they turned and commenced their walk up and down the terrace, "though I believe it is the only matter of difference that ever existed between us."

"Is it not extraordinary," returned the Genoese, "that men should consort together in good and evil, bleed for each other, love each other, do all acts of kindness to each other, as thou and I have done, Melchior, nay, be in the last extremity, and feel more agony for the friend than for one's self, and yet entertain such opinions of their respective creeds, as to fancy the unbeliever in the devil's claws all this time, and to entertain a latent distrust that the very soul which, in all other matters, is deemed so noble and excellent, is to be everlastingly damned for the want of certain opinions and formalities that we ourselves have been taught to think essential?"

"To tell the truth," returned the Swiss, rubbing his forehead like a man who wished to brighten up his ideas, as one would brighten old silver, by friction; "this subject, as thou well knowest, is not my strong side. Luther and Calvin, with other sages, discovered that it was weakness to submit to dogmas, without close examination, merely because they were venerable, and they winnowed the wheat from the chaff. This we call a reform. It is enough for me that men so wise were satisfied with their researches and changes, and I feel little inclination to disturb a decision that has now received the sanction of nearly two centuries of practice. To be plain with thee, I hold it discreet to reverence the opinions of my fathers."

"Though it would seem not of thy grandfathers," said the Italian, dryly, but in perfect good humor. "By San Francesco! thou wouldst have made a worthy cardinal, had chance brought thee into the world fifty leagues further south, or west, or east. But this is the way with the

world, whether it be your Turk, your Hindoo, or your Lutheran, and I fear it is much the same with the children of St. Peter, too. Each has his arguments for faith, or politics, or any interest that may be named, which he uses like a hammer to knock down the bricks of his opponent's reasons, and when he finds himself in the other's intrenchments, why, he gathers together the scattered materials in order to build a wall for his own protection. Then what was oppression yesterday is justifiable defence to-day; fanaticism becomes logic; and credulity and pliant submission get, in two centuries, to be deference to the venerable opinion of our fathers! But let it go—thou wert speaking of thanking God, and in that, Roman though I am, I fervently and devoutly join with or without saints' intercession."

The honest Baron did not like his friend's allusions, though they were much too subtle for his ready comprehension, for the intellect of the Swiss was a little frosted by constant residence among snows and in full view of glaciers, and it wanted the volatile play of the Genoese's fancy, which was apt to expand like air rarefied by the warmth of the sun. This difference of temperament, however, so far from lessening their mutual kindness, was, most probably, the real cause of its existence, since it is well known that friendship, like love, is more apt to be generated by qualities that vary a little from our own than by a perfect homogeneity of character and disposition, which is more liable to give birth to rivalry and contention, than when each party has some distinct capital of his own on which to adventure, and with which to keep alive the interest of him who, in that particular feature, may be but indifferently provided. All that is required for a perfect community of feeling, is a mutual recognition of, and a common respect for, certain great moral rules, without which there can exist no esteem between the upright. The alliance of knaves depends on motives so hackneyed and obvious, that we abstain from any illustration of its principle as a work of supererogation. The Signor Grimaldi and Melchior de Willading were both very upright and justly-minded men, as men go, in intention at least, and their opposite peculiarities and opinions had served, during hot youth, to keep alive the interest of their communications, and were not likely, now that time had mellowed their feelings and brought so many recollections to

strengthen the tie, to overturn what they had been originally the principal instruments in creating.

"Of thy readiness to thank God, I have never doubted," answered the Baron, when his friend had ended the remark just recorded, "but we know that his favors are commonly shown to us here below by means of human instruments. Ought we not, therefore, to manifest another sort of gratitude in favor of the individual who was so serviceable in last night's gust?"

"Thou meanest my untractable countryman? I have bethought me much since we separated of his singular refusal, and hope still to find the means of conquering his obstinacy."

"I hope thou may'st succeed, and thou well know'st that I am always to be counted on as an auxiliary. But he was not in my thoughts at the instant; there is still another who nobly risked more than the mariner in our behalf, since he risked life."

"This is beyond question, and I have already reflected much on the means of doing him good. He is a soldier of fortune, I learn, and if he will take service in Genoa, I will charge myself with the care of his preferment. Trouble not thyself, therefore, concerning the fortunes of young Sigismund; thou knowest my means, and canst not doubt my will."

The Baron cleared his throat, for he had a secret reluctance to reveal his own favorable intentions toward the young man, the last lingering feeling of worldly pride, and the consequence of prejudices which were then universal, and which are even now far from being extinct. A vivid picture of the horrors of the past night luckily flashed across his mind and the good genius of his young preserver triumphed.

"Thou knowest the youth is a Swiss," he said, "and, in virtue of the tie of country, I claim at least an equal right to do him good."

"We will not quarrel for precedence in this matter, but thou wilt do well to remember that I possess especial means to push his interests,—means that thou canst not by possibility use."

"That is not proved," interrupted the Baron de Willading. "I have not thy particular station, it is true, Signor Gaetano, nor thy political power, nor thy princely fortune; but, poor as I am in these, there is a boon in my

keeping that is worth them all, and which will be more acceptable to the boy, or I much mistake his mettle, than any favors thou hast named or canst name."

The Signor Grimaldi had pursued his walk, with eyes thoughtfully fastened on the ground; but he now raised them, in surprise, to the countenance of his friend, as if to ask an explanation. The Baron was not only committed by what had escaped him, but he was warming with opposition, for the best may frequently do very excellent things, under the influence of motives of but a very indifferent aspect.

"Thou knowest I have a daughter," resumed the Swiss firmly, determined to break the ice at once, and expose a decision which he feared his friend might deem a weakness.

"Thou hast; and a fairer, or a modester, or a tenderer, and yet, unless my judgment err, a firmer at need, is not to be found among all the excellent of her excellent sex. But thou wouldst scarce think of bestowing Adelheid in reward for such a service on one so little known, or without her wishes being consulted?"

"Girls of Adelheid's birth and breeding are ever ready to do what is meet to maintain the honor of their families. I deem gratitude to be a debt that must not stand long uncanceled against the name of Willading."

The Genoese looked grave, and it was evident he listened to his friend with something like displeasure.

"We who have so nearly passed through life, good Melchior," he said, "should know its difficulties and its hazards. The way is weary, and it has need of all the solace that affection and a community of feeling can yield to lighten its cares. I have never liked this heartless manner of trafficking in the tenderest ties, to uphold a failing line or a failing fortune; and better it were that Adelheid should pass her days unwooded in thy ancient castle, than give her hand, under any sudden impulse of sentiment, not less than under a cold calculation of interest. Such a girl, my friend, is not to be bestowed without much care and reflection."

"By the mass! to use one of thine own favorite oaths, I wonder to hear thee talk thus!—thou, whom I knew a hot-blooded Italian, jealous as a Turk, and maintaining at thy rapier's point that women were like the steel of thy sword, so easily tarnished by rust, or evil breath, or neg-

lect, that no father or brother could be easy on the score of honor, until the last of his name was well wedded, and that, too, to such as the wisdom of her advisers should choose! I remember thee once saying thou couldst not sleep soundly till thy sister was a wife or a nun."

"This was the language of boyhood and thoughtless youth, and bitterly rebuked have I been for having used it. I wived a beauteous and noble virgin, De Willading; but I much fear that, while my fair conduct in her behalf won her respect and esteem, I was too late to win her love. It is a fearful thing to enter on the solemn and grave ties of married life, without enlisting in the cause of happiness the support of the judgment, the fancy, the tastes, with the feelings that are dependent on them, and, more than all, those wayward inclinations, whose workings too often baffle human foresight. If the hopes of the ardent and generous themselves are deceived in the uncertain lottery of wedlock, the victim will struggle hard to maintain the delusion; but when the calculations of others are patent to the evil, a natural inducement, that comes of the devil I fear, prompts us to aggravate, instead of striving to lessen the evil."

"Thou dost not speak of wedlock as one who found the condition happy, poor Gaetano?"

"I have told thee what I fear was but too true," returned the Genoese, with a heavy sigh. "My birth, vast means, and I trust a fair name, induced the kinsmen of my wife to urge her to a union, that I have since had reason to fear her feelings did not lead her to form. I had a terrible ally, too, in the acknowledged unworthiness of him who had captivated her young fancy, and whom, as age brought reflection, her reason condemned. I was accepted, therefore, as a cure to a bleeding heart and broken peace, and my office, at the best, was not such as a good man could desire, or a proud man tolerate. The unhappy Angiolina died in giving birth to her first child, the unhappy son of whom I have told thee so much. She found peace at last in the grave!"

"Thou hadst not time to give thy manly tenderness and noble qualities an opportunity; else, my life on it, she would have come to love thee, Gaetano, as all love thee who know thee!" returned the Baron, warmly.

"Thanks, my kind friend; but beware of making marriage a mere convenience. There may be folly in calling

each truant inclination that deep sentiment and secret sympathy which firmly knits heart to heart, and doubtless a common fortune may bind the worldly-minded, together ; but this is not the holy union which keeps noble qualities in a family, and which fortifies against the seductions of a world that is already too strong for honesty. I remember to have heard from one that understood his fellow-creatures well, that marriages of mere propriety tend to rob woman of her greatest charm, that of superiority to the vulgar feeling of worldly calculations, and that all communities in which they prevail become, of necessity, selfish beyond the natural limits, and eventually corrupt."

"This may be true ;—but Adelheid loves the youth."

"Ha ! This changes the complexion of the affair. How dost thou know this ?"

"From her own lips. The secret escaped her, under the warmth and sincerity of feeling that the late events so naturally excited."

"And Sigismund !—he has thy approbation ?—for I will not suppose that one like thy daughter yielded her affections unsolicited."

"He has—that is—he has. There is what the world will be apt to call an obstacle, but it shall count for nothing with me. The youth is not noble."

"The objection is serious, my honest friend. It is not wise to tax human infirmity too much, where there is sufficient to endure from causes that cannot be removed. Wedlock is a precarious experiment, and all unusual motives for disgust should be cautiously avoided. I would he were noble."

"The difficulty shall be removed by the Emperor's favor. Thou hast princes in Italy, too, that might be prevailed on to do us this grace, at need ?"

"What is the youth's origin and history, and by what means has a daughter of thine been placed in a situation to love one that is simply born ?"

"Sigismund is a Swiss, and of a family of Bernese burghers, I should think, though, to confess the truth, I know little more than that he has passed several years in foreign service, and that he saved my daughter's life from one of our mountain accidents, some two years since, as he has now saved thine and mine. My sister, near whose castle the acquaintance commenced, permitted the intercourse, which it would now be too late to think of prohibiting.

And, to speak honestly, I begin to rejoice the boy is what he is, in order that our readiness to receive him to our arms may be the more apparent. If the young fellow were the equal of Adelheid in other things, as he is in person and character, he would have too much in his favor. No, by the faith of Calvin!—him whom thou stylest a heretic—I think I rejoice that the boy is not noble!”

“Have it as thou wilt,” returned the Genoese, whose countenance continued to express distrust and thought, for his own experience had made him wary on the subject of doubtful or ill-assorted alliances; “let his origin be what it may, he shall not need gold. I charge myself with seeing that the lands of Willading shall be fairly balanced: and here comes our hospitable host to be witness of the pledge.”

Roger de Blonay advanced upon the terrace to greet his guests, as the Signor Grimaldi concluded. The three old men continued their walk for an hour longer, discussing the fortunes of the young pair, for Melchior de Willading was as little disposed to make a secret of his intentions with one of his friends as with the other.

CHAPTER X.

——“But I have not the time to pause
Upon these gewgaws of the heart.”—WERNER.

THOUGH the word castle is of common use in Europe, as applied to ancient baronial edifices, the thing itself is very different in style, extent, and cost, in different countries. Security, united to dignity and the means of accommodating a train of followers suited to the means of the noble, being the common object, the position and defences of the place necessarily varied according to the general aspect of the region in which it stood. Thus ditches and other broad expanses of water were much depended on in all low countries, as in Flanders, Holland, parts of Germany, and much of France; while hills, spurs, mountains, and more especially the summits of conical rocks, were sought in Switzerland, Italy, and wherever else these natural means of protection could readily be found. Other circumstances, such as climate, wealth, the habits of a people, and

the nature of the feudal rights, also served greatly to modify the appearance and extent of the building. The ancient hold in Switzerland was originally little more than a square solid tower, perched upon a rock, with turrets at its angles. Proof against fire from without, it had ladders to mount from floor to floor, and often contained its beds in the deep recesses of the windows, or in alcoves wrought in the massive wall. As greater security or greater means enabled, offices and constructions of more importance arose around its base inclosing a court. These necessarily followed the formation of the rock, until, in time, the confused and artificial piles, which are now seen mouldering on so many of the minor spurs of the Alps, were created.

As is usual in all ancient holds, the Rittersaal—the Salle des Chevaliers—or the knights' hall of Blonay, as it is differently called in different languages, was both the largest and the most laboriously decorated apartment of the edifice. It was no longer in the rude jail-like keep that grew, as it were, from the living rock, on which it had been reared with so much skill as to render it difficult to ascertain where nature ceased and art commenced; but it had been transferred, a century before the occurrences related in our tale, to a more modern portion of the buildings that formed the southeastern angle of the whole construction.

The room was spacious, square, simple, for such is the fashion of the country, and lighted by windows that looked on one side toward Valais, and on the other over the whole of the irregular, but lovely declivity, to the margin of the Lemán, and along that beautiful sheet, embracing hamlet, village, city, castle, and purple mountain, until the view was limited by the hazy Jura. The window on the latter side of the knights' hall had an iron balcony at a giddy height from the ground, and in this airy lookout Adelheid had taken her seat, when, after quitting her father, she mounted to the apartment common to all the guests of the castle.

We have already alluded generally to the personal appearance and to the moral qualities of the Baron de Wilading's daughter, but we now conceive it necessary to make the reader more intimately acquainted with one who is destined to act no mean part in the incidents of our tale.

It has been said that she was pleasing to the eye, but her beauty was of a kind that depended more on expression, on a union of character with feminine grace, than on

the vulgar lines of regularity and symmetry. While she had no feature that was defective, she had none that was absolutely faultless, though all were combined with so much harmony, and the soft expression of the mild blue eye accorded so well with the gentle play of a sweet mouth, that the soul of their owner seemed ready at all times to appear through these ingenuous tell-tales of her thoughts. Still, maidenly reserve sat in constant watch over all, and it was when the spectator thought himself most in communion with her spirit, that he most felt its pure and correcting influence. Perhaps a cast of high intelligence, of a natural power to discriminate, which much surpassed the limited means accorded to females of that age, contributed their share to hold those near her in respect, and served in some degree as a mild and wise repellent, to counteract the attractions of her gentleness and candor. In short, one cast unexpectedly in her society would not have been slow to infer, and he would have decided correctly, that Adelheid de Willading was a girl of warm and tender affections, of a playful but regulated fancy, of a firm and lofty sense of all her duties, whether natural or merely the result of social obligations; of melting pity, and yet of a habit and quality to think and act for herself, in all those cases in which it was fitting for a maiden of her condition and years to assume such self-control.

It was now more than a year since Adelheid had become fully sensible of the force of her attachment for Sigismund Steinbach, and during all that time she had struggled hard to overcome a feeling which she believed could lead to no happy result. The declaration of the young man himself, a declaration that was extorted involuntarily and in a moment of powerful passion, was accompanied by an admission of its uselessness and folly, and it first opened her eyes to the state of her own feelings. Though she had listened, as all of her sex will listen, even when the passion is hopeless, to such words coming from lips they love, it was with a self-command that enabled her to retain her own secret, and with a settled and pious resolution to do that which she believed to be her duty to herself, to her father, and to Sigismund. From that hour, she ceased to see him, unless under circumstances when it would have drawn suspicion on her motives to refuse, and while she never appeared to forget her heavy obligations to the youth, she

firmly denied herself the pleasure of even mentioning his name when it could be avoided. But of all ungrateful and reluctant tasks, that of striving to forget is the least likely to succeed. Adelheid was sustained only by her sense of duty and the desire not to disappoint her father's wishes, to which habit and custom had given nearly the force of law with maidens of her condition, though her reason and judgment no less than her affections were both strongly enlisted on the other side. Indeed, with the single exception of the general unfitness of a union between two of unequal stations, there was nothing to discredit her choice, if that may be termed choice which, after all, was more the result of spontaneous feeling and secret sympathy than of any other cause, unless it were a certain equivocal reserve, and a manifest uneasiness, whenever allusion was made to the early history and to the family of the soldier. The sensitiveness on the part of Sigismund had been observed and commented on by others as well as by herself, and it had been openly ascribed to the mortification of one who had been thrown by chance into an intimate association that was much superior to what he was entitled to maintain by birth; a weakness but too common, and which few have strength of mind to resist, or sufficient pride to overcome. The intuitive watchfulness of affection, however, led Adelheid to a different conclusion; she saw that he never affected to conceal, while with equal good taste he abstained from obtrusive allusions to the humble nature of his origin, but she also perceived that there were points of his previous history on which he was acutely sensitive, and which at first she feared must be attributed to the consciousness of acts that his clear perception of moral truth condemned, and which he could wish forgotten. For some time Adelheid clung to this discovery as to a healthful and proper antidote to her own truant inclinations, but native rectitude banished a suspicion which had no sufficient ground, as equally unworthy of them both. The effects of a ceaseless mental struggle, and of the fruitlessness of her efforts to overcome her tenderness in behalf of Sigismund, have been described in the fading of her bloom, in the painful solicitude of a countenance naturally so sweet, and in the unsettled melancholy of her playful and mellow eye. These were the real causes of the journey undertaken by her father, and in truth of most of the other events which we are about to describe.

The prospect of the future had undergone a sudden change. The color, though more the effect of excitement than of returning health—for the tide of life, when rudely checked, does not resume its currents at the first breath of happiness—again brightened her cheek and imparted brilliancy to her looks, and smiles stole easily to those lips which had long been growing pallid with anxiety. She leaned forward from the balcony, and never before had the air of her native mountains seemed so balmy and healing. At that moment the subject of her thoughts appeared on the verdant declivity, among the luxuriant nut-trees that shade the natural lawn of Blonay. He saluted her respectfully, and pointed to the glorious panorama of the Leman. The heart of Adelheid beat violently; she struggled for an instant with her fears and her pride, and then, for the first time in her life, she made a signal that she wished him to join her.

Notwithstanding the important service that the young soldier had rendered to the daughter of the Baron de Willading, and the long intimacy which had been its fruit, so great had been the reserve she had hitherto maintained, by placing a constant restraint on her inclinations, though the simple usages of Switzerland permitted greater familiarity of intercourse than was elsewhere accorded to maidens of rank, that Sigismund at first stood rooted to the ground, for he could not imagine the waving of the hand was meant for him. Adelheid saw his embarrassment, and the signal was repeated. The young man sprang up the acclivity with the rapidity of the wind, and disappeared behind the walls of the castle.

The barrier of reserve, so long and so successfully observed by Adelheid, was now passed, and she felt as if a few short minutes must decide her fate. The necessity of making a wide circuit in order to enter the court still afforded a little time for reflection, however, and this she endeavored to improve by collecting her thoughts and recovering her self-possession.

When Sigismund entered the knight's hall, he found the maiden still seated near the open window of the balcony, pale and serious, but perfectly calm, and with such an expression of radiant happiness in her countenance as he had not seen reigning in those sweet lineaments for many painful months. The first feeling was that of pleasure at perceiving how well she bore the alarms and dangers of the

past night. This pleasure he expressed, with the frankness admitted by the habits of the Germans.

"Thou wilt not suffer, Adelheid, by the exposure on the lake!" he said, studying her face until the tell-tale blood stole to her very temples.

"Agitation of the mind is a good antidote to the consequences of bodily exposure. So far from suffering by what has passed, I feel stronger to-day and better able to endure fatigue, than at any time since we came through the gates of Willading. This balmy air, to me, seems Italy, and I see no necessity to journey further in search of what they said was necessary to my health, agreeable objects and a generous sun."

"You will not cross the St. Bernard!" he exclaimed, in a tone of disappointment.

Adelheid smiled, and he felt encouraged, though the smile was ambiguous. Notwithstanding the really noble sincerity of the maiden's disposition, and her earnest desire to set his heart at ease, nature, or habit, or education, for we scarcely know to which the weakness ought to be ascribed, tempted her to avoid a direct explanation.

"Why need one desire aught that is more lovely than this?" she answered, evasively. "Here is a warm air, such a scene as Italy can scarcely surpass, and a friendly roof. The experience of the last twenty-four hours gives little encouragement for attempting the St. Bernard, notwithstanding the fair promises of hospitality and welcome that have been so liberally held out by the good canon."

"Thy eye contradicts thy tongue, Adelheid; thou art happy and well enough to use pleasantry to-day. For Heaven's sake, do not neglect to profit by this advantage, however, under a mistaken opinion that Blonay is the well-sheltered Pisa. When the winter shall arrive, thou wilt see that these mountains are still the icy Alps, and the winds will whistle through this crazy castle, as they are wont to sing through the naked corridors of Willading."

"We have time before us, and can think of this. Thou wilt proceed to Milan, no doubt, as soon as the revels of Vévey are ended."

"The soldier has little choice but duty. My long and frequent leaves of absence of late,—leaves that have been liberally granted to me on account of important family concerns,—impose an additional obligation to be punctual,

that I may not seem forgetful of favors already enjoyed. Although we all owe a heavy debt to nature, our voluntary engagements have ever seemed to me the most serious."

Adelheid listened with breathless attention. Never before had he uttered the word family, in reference to himself, in her presence. The allusion appeared to have created unpleasant recollections in the mind of the young man himself, for when he ceased to speak his countenance fell, and he even appeared to be fast forgetting the presence of his fair companion. The latter turned sensitively from a subject which she saw gave him pain, and endeavored to call his thoughts to other things. By an unforeseen fatality, the very expedient adopted hastened the explanation she would now have given so much to postpone.

"My father has often extolled the site of the Baron de Blonay's castle," said Adelheid, gazing from the window, though all the fair objects of the view floated unheeded before her eyes; "but, until now, I have always suspected that friendly feeling had a great influence on his descriptions."

"You did him injustice then," answered Sigismund, advancing to the opening: "of all the ancient holds of Switzerland, Blonay is perhaps entitled to the palm, for possessing the fairest site. Regard yon treacherous lake, Adelheid! Can we fancy that sleeping mirror the same boiling caldron on which we were so lately tossed, helpless and nearly hopeless?"

"Hopeless, Sigismund, but for thee!"

"Thou forgett'st the daring Italian, without whose coolness and skill we must indeed have irredeemably perished."

"And what would it be to me if the worthless bark were saved, while my father and his friend were abandoned to the frightful fate that befell the patron and that unhappy peasant of Berne!"

The pulses of the young man beat high, for there was a tenderness in the tones of Adelheid to which he was unaccustomed, and which, indeed, he had never before discovered in her voice.

"I will go seek this brave mariner," he said, trembling lest his self-command should be again lost by the seductions of such a communion:—"It is time he had more substantial proofs of our gratitude."

"No, Sigismund," returned the maiden firmly, and in a

way to chain him to the spot, "thou must not quit me yet. I have much to say—much that touches my future happiness, and, I am perhaps weak enough to believe, thine."

Sigismund was bewildered, for the manner of his companion, though the color went and came in sudden and bright flashes across her pure brows, was miraculously calm and full of dignity. He took the seat to which she silently pointed, and sat motionless as if carved in stone, his faculties absorbed in the single sense of hearing. Adelheid saw that the crisis was arrived, and that retreat, without an appearance of levity that her character and pride equally forbade, was impossible. The inbred and perhaps the inherent feelings of her sex would now have caused her again to avoid the explanation, at least as coming from herself, but that she was sustained by a high and holy motive.

"Thou must find great delight, Sigismund, in reflecting on thine own good acts to others. But for thee Melchior de Willading would have long since been childless; and but for thee his daughter would now be an orphan. The knowledge that thou hast had the power and the will to succor thy friends must be worth all other knowledge!"

"As connected with thee, Adelheid, it is," he answered in a low voice; "I would not exchange the secret happiness of having been of this use to thee, and to those thou lovest, for the throne of the powerful prince I serve. I have had my secret wrested from me already, and it is vain attempting to deny it, if I would. Thou knowest I love thee; and, in spite of myself, my heart cherishes the weakness. I rather rejoice, than dread, to say, that it will cherish it until it cease to feel. This is more than I ever intended to repeat to thy modest ears, which ought not to be wounded by idle declarations like these, but—thou smilest—Adelheid!—can thy gentle spirit mock at a hopeless passion!"

"Why should my smile mean mockery?"

"Adelheid!—nay—this never can be. One of my birth—my ignoble, nameless origin, cannot even intimate his wishes, with honor, to a lady of thy name and expectations!"

"Sigismund, it *can* be. Thou hast not well calculated either the heart of Adelheid de Willading, or the gratitude of her father."

The young man gazed earnestly at the face of the maiden,

which, now that she had disburdened her soul of its most secret thought, reddened to the temples, more however with excitement than with shame, for she met his ardent look with the mild confidence of innocence and affection. She believed, and she had every reason so to believe, that her words would give pleasure, and, with the jealous watchfulness of true love, she would not willingly let a single expression of happiness escape her. But, instead of the brightening eye, and the sudden expression of joy that she expected, the young man appeared overwhelmed with feelings of a very opposite, and indeed of the most painful, character. His breathing was difficult, his look wandered, and his lips were convulsed. He passed his hand across his brow, like a man in intense agony, and a cold perspiration broke out, as by a dreadful inward working of the spirit, upon his forehead and temples, in large visible drops.

"Adelheid—dearest Adelheid—thou knowest not what thou sayest! One like me can never become thy husband."

"Sigismund!—why this distress? Speak to me—ease thy mind by words. I swear to thee that the consent of my father is accompanied on my part by a willing heart. I love thee, Sigismund—wouldst thou have me—can I say more?"

The young man gazed at her incredulously, and then, as thought became more clear, as one regards a much-prized object that is hopelessly lost. He shook his head mournfully, and buried his face in his hands.

"Say no more, Adelheid—for my sake—for thine own sake, say no more—in mercy, be silent! Thou never canst be mine! No, no—honor forbids it; in thee it would be madness, in me dishonor—we can never be united. What fatal weakness has kept me near thee—I have long dreaded this——"

"Dreaded!"

"Nay, do not repeat my words,—for I scarce know what I say. Thou and thy father have yielded, in a moment of vivid gratitude, to a generous, a noble impulse—but it is not for me to profit by the accident that has enabled me to gain this advantage. What would all of thy blood, all of the republic say, Adelheid, were the noblest born, the best endowed, the fairest, gentlest, best maiden of the canton, to wed a nameless, houseless, soldier of fortune, who

has but his sword and some gifts of nature to recommend him? Thy excellent father will surely think better of this, and we will speak of it no more!"

"Were I to listen to the common feelings of my sex, Sigismund, this reluctance to accept what both my father and myself offer might cause me to feign displeasure. But, between thee and me, there shall be naught but holy truth. My father has well weighed all these objections, and he has generously decided to forget them. As for me, placed in the scale against thy merits, they have never weighed at all. If thou canst not become noble in order that we may be equals, I shall find more happiness in descending to thy level, than by living in heartless misery at the vain height where I have been placed by accident."

"Blessed, ingenuous girl! But what does it all avail? Our marriage is impossible."

"If thou knowest of any obstacle that would render it improper for a weak, but virtuous girl——"

"Hold, Adelheid!—do not finish the sentence. I am sufficiently humbled—sufficiently debased—without this cruel suspicion."

"Then why is our union impossible—when my father not only consents, but wishes it may take place?"

"Give me time for thought—thou shalt know all, Adelheid, sooner or later. Yes, this is, at the least, due to thy noble frankness. Thou shouldst in justice have known it long before."

Adelheid regarded him in speechless apprehension, for the evident and violent physical struggles of the young man too fearfully announced the mental agony he endured. The color had fled from her own face, in which the beauty of expression now reigned undisputed mistress; but it was the expression of the mingled sentiments of wonder, dread, tenderness, and alarm. He saw that his own sufferings were fast communicating themselves to his companion, and, by a powerful effort, he so far mastered his emotions as to regain a portion of his self-command.

"This explanation has been too heedlessly delayed," he continued; "cost what it may, it shall be no longer postponed. Thou wilt not accuse me of cruelty, or of dishonest silence, but remember the failing of human nature, and pity rather than blame a weakness which may be the cause of as much future sorrow to thyself, beloved Adelheid, as it is now of bitter regret to me. I have never

concealed from thee that my birth is derived from that class which throughout Europe is believed to be of inferior rights to thine own ; on this head, I am proud rather than humble, for the invidious distinctions of usage have too often provoked comparisons, and I have been in situations to know that the mere accidents of descent bestow neither personal excellence, superior courage, nor higher intellect. Though human inventions may serve to depress the less fortunate, God has given fixed limits to the means of men. He that would be greater than his kind, and illustrious by unnatural expedients, must debase others to attain this end. By different means than these there is no nobility, and he who is unwilling to admit an inferiority which exists only in idea can never be humbled by an artifice so shallow. On the subject of mere birth, as it is ordinarily estimated, whether it come from pride, or philosophy, or the habit of commanding as a soldier those who might be deemed by superiors as men, I have never been very sensitive. Perhaps the heavier disgrace which crushes me may have caused this want to appear lighter than it otherwise might."

"Disgrace!" repeated Adelheid, in a voice that was nearly choked. "The word is fearful, coming from one of thy regulated mind, and as applied to himself."

"I cannot choose another. Disgrace it is by the common consent of men—by long and enduring opinion—it would almost seem by the just judgment of God. Dost thou not believe, Adelheid, that there are certain races which are deemed accursed, to answer some great and unseen end—races on whom the holy blessings of Heaven never descend, as they visit the meek and well-deserving that come of other lines !"

"How can I believe this gross injustice, on the part of a Power that is wise without bounds, and forgiving to parental love ?"

"Thy answer would be well were this earth the universe, or this state of being the last. But He whose sight extends beyond the grave, who fashions justice, and mercy, and goodness, on a scale commensurate with his own attributes, and not according to our limited means, is not to be estimated by the narrow rules that we apply to men. No, we must not measure the ordinances of God by laws that are plausible in our own eyes. Justice is a relative and not an abstract quality ; and, until we understand the relations of

the Deity to ourselves as well as we understand our own relations to the Deity, we reason in the dark."

"I do not like to hear thee speak thus, Sigismund, and, least of all, with a brow so clouded, and in a voice so hollow!"

"I will tell my tale more cheerfully, dearest. I have no right to make thee partner of my misery; and yet this is the manner I have reasoned, and thought, and pondered—aye, until my brain has grown heated, and the power to reason itself has nearly tottered. Ever since that accursed hour, in which the truth became known to me, and I was made the master of the fatal secret, have I endeavored to feel and reason thus."

"What truth?—what secret? If thou lovest me, Sigismund, speak calmly and without reserve."

The young man gazed at her anxious face in a way to show how deeply he felt the weight of the blow he was about to give. Then, after a pause, he continued.

"We have lately passed through a terrible scene together, dearest Adelheid. It was one that may well lessen the distances set between us by human laws and the tyranny of opinions. Had it been the will of God that the bark should perish, what a confused crowd of ill-assorted spirits would have passed together into eternity! We had them there of all degrees of vice, as of nearly all degrees of cultivation, from the subtle iniquity of the wily Neapolitan juggler to thine own pure soul. There would have died in the Winkelried the noble of high degree, the reverend priest, the soldier in the pride of his strength, and the mendicant! Death is an uncompromising leveller, and the depths of the lake, at least, might have washed out all our infamy, whether it came of real demerits or merely from received usage; even the luckless Balthazar, the persecuted and hated headsman, might have found those who would have mourned his loss."

"If any could have died unwept in meeting such a fate, it must have been one that, in common, awakes so little of human sympathy; and one, too, who, by dealing himself in the woes of others, has less claim to the compassion that we yield to most of our species."

"Spare me—in mercy, Adelheid, spare me—thou speakest of my father!"

CHAPTER XI.

‘Fortune had smiled upon Guelberto’s birth,
The heir of Valdespesa’s rich domain ;
An only child, he grew in years and worth,
And well repaid a father’s anxious pain.”—SOUTHEY.

As Sigismund uttered this communication, so terrible to the ear of the listener, he arose and fled from the room. The possession of a kingdom would not have tempted him to remain and note its effect. The domestics of Blonay observed his troubled air and rapid strides as he passed them, but too simple to suspect more than the ordinary impetuosity of youth, he succeeded in getting through the inferior gate of the castle and into the fields, without attracting any embarrassing attention to his movements. Here he began to breathe more freely, and the load which had nearly choked his respiration became lightened. For half an hour the young man paced the greensward, scarcely conscious whither he went, until he found that his steps had again led him beneath the window of the knights’ hall. Glancing an eye upward, he saw Adelheid still seated at the balcony, and apparently yet alone. He thought she had been weeping, and he cursed the weakness which had kept him from effecting the often-renewed resolution to remove himself and his cruel fortunes forever from before her mind. A second look, however, showed him that he was again beckoned to ascend ! The revolutions in the purposes of lovers are sudden and easily effected ; and Sigismund, through whose mind a dozen ill-digested plans of placing the sea between himself and her he loved had just been floating, was now hurriedly retracing his steps to her presence.

Adelheid had necessarily been educated under the influence of the prejudices of the age and of the country in which she lived. The existence of the office of headsman in Berne, and the nature of its hereditary duties, were well known to her ; and, though superior to the inimical feeling which had so lately been exhibited against the luckless Balthazar, she had certainly never anticipated a shock so cruel as was now produced, by abruptly learning that this despised and persecuted being was the father of the

youth to whom she had yielded her virgin affections. When the words which proclaimed the connection had escaped the lips of Sigismund, she listened like one who fancied that her ears deceived her. She had prepared herself to learn that he derived his being from some peasant or ignoble artisan, and, once or twice, as he drew nearer to the fatal declaration, awkward glimmerings of a suspicion that some repulsive moral unworthiness was connected with his origin troubled her imagination; but her apprehensions could not, by possibility, once turn in the direction of the revolting truth. It was some time before she was able to collect her thoughts, or to reflect on the course it most became her to pursue. But, as has been seen, it was not long before she could summon the self-command to request what she now saw was doubly necessary, another meeting with her lover. As both had thought of nothing but his last words during the short separation, there appeared no abruptness in the manner in which he resumed the discourse, on seating himself at her side, exactly as if they had not parted at all.

"The secret has been torn from me, Adelheid. The headsman of the canton is my father; were the fact publicly known, the heartless and obdurate laws would compel me to be his successor. He has no other child, except a gentle girl—one innocent and kind as thou."

Adelheid covered her face with both her hands, as if to shut out a view of the horrible truth. Perhaps an instinctive reluctance to permit her companion to discover how great a blow had been given by his avowal of this birth, had also its influence in producing the movement. They who have passed the period of youth, and who can recall those days of inexperience and hope, when the affections are fresh and the heart is untainted with too much communion with the world,—and, especially, they who know of what a delicate compound of the imaginative and the real the master-passion is formed, how sensitively it regards all that can reflect credit on the beloved object, and with what ingenuity it endeavors to find plausible excuses for every blot that may happen, either by accident or demerit, to tarnish the lustre of a picture that fancy has so largely aided in drawing, will understand the rude nature of the shock that she had received. But Adelheid de Willading, though a woman in the liveliness and fervor of her imagination, as well as in the proneness to conceive her own in-

genuous conceptions to be more founded in reality than a sterner view of things might possibly have warranted, was a woman also, in the more generous qualities of the heart, and in those enduring principles, which seem to have predisposed the better part of the sex to make the heaviest sacrifices rather than be false to their affections. While her frame shuddered, therefore, with the violence and abruptness of the emotions she had endured, dawnings of the right gleamed upon her pure mind, and it was not long before she was able to contemplate the truth with the steadiness of principle, though it might, at the same time, have been with much of the lingering weakness of humanity. When she lowered her hands, she looked toward the mute and watchful Sigismund with a smile that caused the deadly paleness of her features to resemble a gleam of the sun lighting upon a spotless peak of her native mountains.

"It would be vain to endeavor to conceal from thee, Sigismund," she said, "that I could wish this were not so. I will confess even more—that when the truth first broke upon me, thy repeated services, and, what is even less pardonable, thy tried worth, were for an instant forgotten in the reluctance I felt to admit that my fate could ever be united with one so unhappily situated. There are moments when prejudices and habits are stronger than reason; but their triumph is short in well-intentioned minds. The terrible injustice of our laws has never struck me with such force before, though last night, while those wretched travellers were so eager for the blood of—of——"

"My father, Adelheid."

"Of the author of thy being, Sigismund," she continued, with a solemnity that proved to the young man how deeply she revered the tie. "I was compelled to see that society might be cruelly unjust; but now I find its laws and prohibitions visiting one like thee, so far from joining in its oppression, my soul revolts against the wrong."

"Thanks—thanks—a thousand thanks!" returned the young man, fervently. "I did not expect less than this from thee, Mademoiselle de Willading."

"If thou didst not expect more—far more, Sigismund," resumed the maiden, her ashen hue brightened to crimson, "thou hast scarcely been less unjust than the world; and I will add, thou hast never understood that Adelheid de Willading, whose name is uttered with so cold a form. We all have moments of weakness; moments when the se-

ductions of life, the worthless ties which bind together the thoughtless and selfish in what are called the interests of the world, appear of more value than aught else. I am no visionary, to fancy imaginary and factitious obligations superior to those which nature and wisdom have created—for if there be much unjustifiable cruelty in the practices, there is also much that is wise in the ordinances, of society—or to think that a wayward fancy is to be indulged at any and every expense to the feelings and opinions of others. On the contrary, I well know that so long as men exist in the condition in which they are, it is little more than common prudence to respect their habits; and that ill-assorted unions, in general, contain in themselves a dangerous enemy to happiness. Had I always known thy history, dread of the consequences, or those cold forms which protect the fortunate, would probably have interposed to prevent either from learning much of the other's character. I say not this, Sigismund, as by the eye I see thou wouldst think, in reproach for any deception, for I well know the accidental nature of our acquaintance, and that the intimacy was forced upon thee by our own importunate gratitude, but simply, and in explanation of my own feelings. As it is, we are not to judge of our situation by ordinary rules, and I am not now to decide on your pretensions to my hand merely as the daughter of the Baron de Willading receiving a proposal from one whose birth is not noble, but as Adelheid should weigh the claims of Sigismund, subject to some diminution of advantages, if thou wilt, that is perhaps greater than she had at first anticipated."

"Dost thou consider the acceptance of my hand possible, after what thou knowest?" exclaimed the young man, in open wonder.

"So far from regarding the question in that manner, I ask myself if it will be right—if it be possible, to reject the preserver of my own life, the preserver of my father's life, Sigismund Steinbach, because he is the son of one that men persecute?"

"Adelheid!"

"Do not anticipate my words," said the maiden calmly, but in a way to check his impatience by the quiet dignity of her manner. "This is an important, I might say a solemn decision, and it has been presented to me suddenly and without preparation. Thou wilt not think the worse

of me, for asking time to reflect before I give the pledge that in my eyes will be forever sacred. My father, believing thee to be of obscure origin, and thoroughly conscious of thy worth, dear Sigismund, authorized me to speak as I did in the beginning of our interview ; but my father may possibly think the conditions of his consent altered by this unhappy exposure of the truth. It is meet that I tell him all, for thou knowest I must abide by his decision. This thine own sense and filial piety will approve."

In spite of the strong objectionable facts that he had just revealed, hope had begun to steal upon the wishes of the young man, as he listened to the consoling words of the single-minded and affectionate Adelheid. It would scarcely have been possible for a youth so endowed by nature, and one so inevitably conscious of his own value, though so modest in its exhibition, not to feel encouraged by her ingenuous and frank admission, as she betrayed his influence over her happiness in the undisguised and simple manner related. But the intention to appeal to her father caused him to view the subject more dispassionately, for his strong sense was not slow in pointing out the difference between the two judges, in a case like his.

"Trouble him not, Adelheid ; the consciousness that his prudence denies what a generous feeling might prompt him to bestow, may render him unhappy. It is impossible that Melchior de Willading should consent to give an only child to a son of the headsman of his canton. At some other time when the recollections of the late storm shall be less vivid, thine own reason will approve of his decision."

His companion, who was thoughtfully leaning her spotless brow on her hand, did not appear to hear his words. She had recovered from the shock given by the sudden announcement of his origin, and was now musing intently, and with cooler discrimination, on the commencement of their acquaintance, its progress and all its little incidents, down to the grave events which had so gradually and firmly cemented the sentiments of esteem and admiration in the stronger and indelible tie of affection.

"If thou art the son of him thou namest, why art thou known by the name of Steinbach, when Balthazar bears another?" demanded Adelheid, anxious to seize even the faintest hold of hope.

"It was my intention to conceal nothing, but to lay be-

fore thee the history of my life, with all the reasons that may have influenced my conduct," returned Sigismund; "at some other time, when both are in a calmer state of mind, I shall dare to entreat a hearing——"

"Delay is unnecessary—it might even be improper. It is my duty to explain everything to my father, and he may wish to know why thou hast not always appeared what thou art. Do not fancy, Sigismund, that I distrust thy motive, but the wariness of the old and the confidence of the young have so little in common!—I would rather that thou told me now."

He yielded to the mild earnestness of her manner, and to the sweet but sad smile with which she seconded the appeal.

"If thou wilt hear the melancholy history, Adelheid," he said, "there is no sufficient reason why I should wish to postpone the little it will be necessary to say. You are probably familiar with the laws of the canton, I mean those cruel ordinances by which a particular family is condemned, for a better word can scarcely be found, to discharge the duties of this revolting office. This duty may have been a privilege in the dark ages, but it is now become a tax that none, who have been educated with better hopes, can endure to pay. My father, trained from infancy to expect the employment, and accustomed to its discharge in contemplation, succeeded to his parent while yet young, and, though formed by nature a meek and even a compassionate man, he has never shrunk from his bloody tasks, whenever required to fulfil them by the command of his superiors. But, touched by a sentiment of humanity, it was his wish to avert from me what his better reason led him to think the calamity of our race. I am the eldest born, and, strictly, I was the child most liable to be called to assume the office, but, as I have heard, the tender love of my mother induced her to suggest a plan by which I, at least, might be rescued from the odium that had so long been attached to our name. I was secretly conveyed from the house while yet an infant; a feigned death concealed the pious fraud, and thus far, Heaven be praised! the authorities are ignorant of my birth!"

"And thy mother, Sigismund; I have great respect for that noble mother, who, doubtless, is endowed with more than her sex's firmness and constancy, since she must have sworn faith and love to thy father, knowing his duties and

the hopelessness of their being evaded? I feel a reverence for a woman so superior to the weaknesses, and yet so true to the real and best affections, of her sex!"

The young man smiled so painfully as to cause his enthusiastic companion to regret that she had put the question.

"My mother is certainly a woman not only to be loved, but in many particulars deeply to be revered. My poor and noble mother has a thousand excellences, being a most tender parent, with a heart so kind that it would grieve her to see injury done even to the meanest living thing. She was not a woman, surely, intended by God to be the mother of a line of executioners!"

"Thou seest, Sigismund," said Adelheid, nearly breathless in the desire to seek an excuse for her own predilections, and to lessen the mental agony he endured—"thou seest that one gentle and excellent woman, at least, could trust her happiness to thy family. No doubt she was the daughter of some worthy and just-viewing burgher of the canton, that had educated his child to distinguish between misfortune and crime?"

"She was an only child and an heiress, like thyself, Adelheid," he answered, looking about him as if he sought some object on which he might cast part of the bitterness that loaded his heart. "Thou art not less the beloved and cherished of thine own parent than was my excellent mother of hers!"

"Sigismund, thy manner is startling! What wouldst thou say?"

"Neufchâtel, and other countries besides Berne, have their privileged! My mother was the only child of the headsman of the first. Thus thou seest, Adelheid, that I boast my quarterings as well as another. God be praised! we are not legally compelled, however, to butcher the condemned of any country but our own!"

The wild bitterness with which this was uttered, and the energy of his language, struck thrilling chords on every nerve of his listener.

"So many honors should not be unsupported," he resumed. "We are rich, for people of humble wishes, and have ample means of living without the revenues of our charge—I love to put forth our long-acquired honors! The means of a respectable livelihood are far from being wanted. I have told you of the kind intentions of my

mother to redeem one of her children, at least, from the stigma which weighed upon us all, and the birth of a second son enabled her to effect this charitable purpose, without attracting attention. I was nursed and educated apart, for many years, in ignorance of my birth. At a suitable age, notwithstanding the early death of my brother, I was sent to seek advancement in the service of the house of Austria, under the feigned name I bear. I will not tell thee the anguish I felt, Adelheid, when the truth was at length revealed! Of all the cruelties inflicted by society, there is none so unrighteous in its nature as the stigma it entails in the succession of crime or misfortune; of all its favors, none can find so little justification, in right, and reason, as the privileges accorded to the accident of descent."

"And yet we are much accustomed to honor those that come of an ancient line, and to see some part of the glory of the ancestor even in the most remote descendant."

"The more remote, the greater is the world's deference. What better proof can we have of the world's weakness? Thus the immediate child of the hero, he whose blood is certain, who bears the image of the father in his face, who has listened to his counsels, and may be supposed to have derived at least some portion of his greatness from the nearness of his origin, is less a prince than he who has imbibed the current through a hundred vulgar streams, and, were truth but known, may have no natural claim at all upon the much prized blood! This comes of artfully leading the mind to prejudices, and of a vicious longing in man to forget his origin and destiny, by wishing to be more than nature ever intended he should become."

"Surely, Sigismund, there is something justifiable in the sentiment of desiring to belong to the good and noble!"

"If good and noble were the same. Thou hast well designated the feeling, so long as it is truly a sentiment, it is not only excusable but wise; for who would not wish to come of the brave, and honest, and learned, or by what other greatness they may be known?—it is wise, since the legacy of his virtues is perhaps the dearest incentive that a good man has for struggling against the currents of baser interest; but what hope is left to one like me, who finds himself so placed that he can neither inherit nor trans-

mit aught but disgrace! I do not affect to despise the advantages of birth, simply because I do not possess them; I only complain that artful combinations have perverted what should be sentiment and taste, into a narrow and vulgar prejudice, by which the really ignoble enjoy privileges greater than those perhaps who are worthy of the highest honors man can bestow."

Adelheid had encouraged the digression, which, with one less gifted with strong good sense than Sigismund, might have only served to wound his pride, but she perceived that he eased his mind by thus drawing on his reason, and by setting up that which should be in opposition to that which was.

"Thou knowest," she answered, "that neither my father nor I am disposed to lay much stress on the opinions of the world, as it concerns thee."

"That is, neither will insist on nobility; but will either consent to share the obloquy of a union with an hereditary executioner?"

"Thou hast not yet related all it may be necessary to know, that we may decide."

"There is left little to explain. The expedient of my kind parents has thus far succeeded. The two surviving children, my sister and myself, were snatched, for a time at least, from their accursed fortune, while my poor brother, who promised little, was left, by a partiality I will not stop to examine, to pass as the inheritor of our infernal privileges. Nay, pardon, dearest Adelheid, I will be more cool; but death has saved the youth from the execrable duties, and I am now the only male child of Balthazar—yes," he added, laughing frightfully, "I too have now a narrow monopoly of all the honors of our house!"

"Thou—thou, Sigismund—with thy habits, thy education, thy feelings, thou surely canst not be required to discharge the duties of this horrible office!"

"It is easy to see that my high privileges do not charm you, Mademoiselle de Willading; nor can I wonder at the taste. My chief surprise should be, that you so long tolerate an executioner in your presence."

"Did I not know and understand the bitterness of feeling natural to one so placed, this language would cruelly hurt me, Sigismund; but thou canst not truly mean there is a real danger of thy ever being called to execute this duty?"

Should there be the chance of such a calamity, may not the influence of my father avert it? He is not without weight in the councils of the canton."

"At present his friendship need not be taxed, for none but my parents, my sister, and thou, Adelheid, are acquainted with the facts I have just related. My poor sister is an artless, but unhappy girl, for the well-intentioned design of our mother has greatly disqualified her from bearing the truth as she might have done, had it been kept constantly before her eyes. To the world, a young kinsman of my father appears destined to succeed him, and then the matter must stand until fortune shall decide differently. As respects my poor sister, there is some little hope that the evil may be altogether averted. She is on the point of a marriage here at Vévey, that may be the means of concealing her origin in new ties. As for me, time must decide my fate."

"Why should the truth be ever known!" exclaimed Adelheid, nearly gasping for breath, in her eagerness to propose some expedient that should rescue Sigismund forever from so odious an office. "Thou sayest that there are ample means in thy family—relinquish all to this youth, on condition that he assume thy place!"

"I would gladly beggar myself to be quit of it——"

"Nay, thou wilt not be a beggar while there is wealth among the De Willadings. Let the final decision, in respect to other things, be what it may, this we can at least promise!"

"My sword will prevent me from being under the necessity of accepting the boon thou wouldst offer. With this good sword I can always command an honorable existence, should Providence save me from the disgrace of exchanging it for that of the executioner. But there exists an obstacle of which thou hast not yet heard. My sister, who has certainly no admiration for the honors that have humiliated our race for so many generations—I might say ages—have we not ancient honors, Adelheid, as well as thou?—my sister is contracted to one who bargains for eternal secrecy on this point, as the condition of his accepting the hand and ample dowry of one of the gentlest of human beings! Thou seest that others are not as generous as thyself, Adelheid! My father, anxious to dispose of his child, has consented to the terms, and as the youth who is next in succession to the family honors is little dis-

posed to accept them, and has already some suspicion of the deception, as respects her, I may be compelled to appear in order to protect the offspring of my unoffending sister from the curse."

This was assailing Adelheid in a point where she was the weakest. One of her generous temperament and self-denying habits could scarce entertain the wish of exacting that from another which she was not willing to undergo herself, and the hope that had just been reviving in her heart was nearly extinguished by the discovery. Still she was so much in the habit of feeling under the guidance of her excellent sense, and it was so natural to cling to her just wishes, while there was a reasonable chance of their being accomplished, that she did not despair.

"Thy sister and her future husband know her birth, and understand the chances they run."

"She knows all this, and such is her generosity, that she is not disposed to betray me in order to serve herself. But this self-denial forms an additional obligation on my part to declare myself the wretch I am. I cannot say that my sister is accustomed to regard our long-endured fortunes with all the horror I feel, for she has been longer acquainted with the facts, and the domestic habits of her sex have left her less exposed to the encounter of the world's hatred, and perhaps she is partly ignorant of all the odium we sustain. My long absences in foreign services delayed the confidence as respects myself, while the yearnings of a mother toward an only daughter caused her to be received into the family, though still in secret, several years before I was told the truth. She is also much my junior; and all these causes, with some difference in our education, have less disposed her to misery than I am; for while my father with a cruel kindness, had me well and even liberally instructed, Christine was taught as better became the hopes and origin of both. Now tell me, Adelheid, that thou hatest me for my parentage, and despisest me for having so long dared to intrude on thy company, with the full consciousness of what I am forever present to my thoughts!"

"I like not to hear thee make these bitter allusions to an accident of this nature, Sigismund. Were I to tell thee that I do not feel this circumstance with nearly, if not quite, as much poignancy as thyself," added the ingenuous girl, with a noble frankness, "I should do injustice to my

gratitude and to my esteem for thy character. But there is more elasticity in the heart of woman than in that of thy imperious and proud sex. So far from thinking of thee as thou wouldst fain believe, I see naught but what is natural and justifiable in thy reserve. Remember, thou hast not tempted my ears by professions and prayers, as women are commonly entreated, but that the interest I feel in thee has been modestly and fairly won. I can neither say nor hear more at present, for this unexpected announcement has in some degree unsettled my mind. Leave me to reflect on what I ought to do, and rest assured that thou canst not have a kinder or more partial advocate of what truly belongs to thy honor and happiness than my own heart."

As the daughter of Melchior de Willading concluded, she extended her hand with affection to the young man, who pressed it against his breast with manly tenderness, when he slowly and reluctantly withdrew.

CHAPTER XII.

"To know no more
Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise."—MILTON.

OUR heroine was a woman in the best meaning of that endearing, and, we might add, comprehensive word. Sensitive, reserved, and at times even timid, on points that did not call for the exercise of higher qualities, she was firm in her principles, constant as she was fond in her affections, and self-devoted when duty and inclination united to induce the concession, to a degree that placed the idea of sacrifice out of the question. On the other hand, the liability to receive lively impressions, a distinctive feature of her sex, and the aptitude to attach importance to the usages by which she was surrounded, and which is necessarily greatest in those who lead secluded and inactive lives, rendered it additionally difficult for her mind to escape from the trammels of opinion, and to think with indifference of circumstances which all near her treated with high respect, or to which they attached a stigma allied to disgust. Had the case been reversed, had Sigismund been noble, and Adelheid a headsman's child, it is probable the

young man might have found the means to indulge his passion without making too great a sacrifice of his pride. By transporting his wife to his castle, conferring his own established name, separating her from all that was unpleasant and degrading in the connection, and finding occupation for his own mind in the multiplying and engrossing employments of his station, he would have diminished motives for contemplating, and consequently for lamenting, the objectionable features of the alliance he had made. These are the advantages which nature and the laws of society give to man over the weaker but the truer sex : and yet how few would have had sufficient generosity to make even the sacrifice of feeling which such a course required ! On the other hand, Adelheid would be compelled to part with the ancient and distinguished appellation of her family, to adopt one which was deemed infamous in the canton, or, if some politic expedient were found to avert this first disgrace, it would unavoidably be of a nature to attract, rather than to avert, the attention of all who knew the facts, from the humiliating character of his origin. She had no habitual relief against the constant action of her thoughts, for the sphere of woman narrows the affections in such a way as to render them most dependent on the little accidents of domestic life ; she could not close her doors against communication with the kinsmen of her husband, should it be his pleasure to command or his feeling to desire it ; and it would become obligatory on her to listen to the still but never-ceasing voice of duty, and to forget, at his request, that she had ever been more fortunate, or that she was born for better hopes.

We do not say that all these calculations crossed the mind of the musing maiden, though she certainly had a general and vague view of the consequences that were likely to be drawn upon herself by a connection with Sigismund. She sat motionless, buried in deep thought, long after his disappearance. The young man had passed by the postern around the base of the castle, and was descending the mountain-side across the sloping meadows with rapid steps, and probably for the first time since their acquaintance her eye followed his manly figure vacantly and with indifference.

Her mind was too intently occupied for the usual observation of the senses. The whole of that grand and lovely landscape was spread before her without conveying

impressions, as we gaze into the void of the firmament with our looks on vacuum. Sigismund had disappeared among the walls of the vineyards, when she arose, and drew such a sigh as is apt to escape us after long and painful meditation. But the eyes of the high-minded girl were bright and her cheek flushed, while the whole of her features wore an expression of loftier beauty than ordinarily distinguished even her loveliness. Her own resolution was formed. She had decided, with the rare and generous self-devotion of a female heart that loves, and which can love in its freshness and purity but once. At that instant footsteps were heard in the corridor, and the three old nobles whom we so lately left on the castle terrace, appeared together in the knight's hall.

Melchior de Willading approached his daughter with a joyous face, for he, too, had lately gained what he conceived to be a glorious conquest over his prejudices, and the victory put him in excellent humor with himself.

"The question is forever decided," he said, kissing the burning forehead of Adelheid with affection, and rubbing his hands in the manner of one who was glad to be free from a perplexing doubt. "These good friends agree with me, that in a case like this, it becomes even our birth to forget the origin of the youth. He who has saved the lives of the two last Willadings at least deserves to have some share in what is left of them. Here is my good Grimaldi, too, ready to beard me if I will not consent to let him enrich the brave fellow—as if we were beggars, and had not the means of supporting our kinsman in credit at home. But we will not be indebted even to so tried a friend for a tittle of our happiness. The work shall be all our own, even to the letters of nobility, which I shall command at an early day from Vienna; for it would be cruel to let the noble fellow want so simple an advantage, which will at once raise him to our own level, and make him as good—aye, by the beard of Luther! better than the best man in Berne."

"I have never known thee niggardly before, though I have known thee often well intrenched behind Swiss frugality," said the Signor Grimaldi, laughing. "Thy life, my dear Melchior, may have excellent value in thine own eyes, but I am little disposed to set so mean a price on my own as thou appearest to think it should command. Thou hast decided well, I will say nobly, in the best meaning of the

word, in consenting to receive this brave Sigismund as a son ; but thou art not to think, young lady, because this body of mine is getting the worse for use, that I hold it altogether worthless, and that it is to be dragged from yonder lake like so much foul linen, and no questions are to be asked touching the manner in which the service has been done. I claim to portion thy husband, that he may at least make an appearance that becomes the son-in-law of Melchior de Willading. Am I of no value, that ye treat me so unceremoniously as to say I shall not pay for my own preservation ?”

“Have it thine own way, good Gaetano—have it as thou wilt, so thou dost but leave us the youth——”

“Father——”

“I will have no maidenly affectation, Adelheid. I expect thee to receive the husband we offer with as good a grace as if he wore a crown. It has been agreed upon between us that Sigismund Steinbach is to be my son ; and from time immemorial the daughters of our house have submitted, in these affairs, to what has been advised by the wisdom of their seniors, as became their sex and inexperience.”

The three old men had entered the hall full of good humor, and it would have been sufficiently apparent, by the manner of the Baron de Willading, that he trifled with Adelheid, had it not been well known to the others that her feelings were chiefly consulted in the choice that had just been made.

But, notwithstanding the high glee in which the father spoke, the pleasure and buoyancy of his manner did not communicate itself to the child as quickly as he could wish. There was far more than virgin embarrassment in the mien of Adelheid. Her color went and came, and her look turned from one to the other painfully, while she struggled to speak. The Signor Grimaldi whispered to his companions, and Roger de Blonay discreetly withdrew, under the pretence that his services were needed at Vévey, where active preparations were making for the Abbaye des Vignerons. The Genoese would then have followed his example, but the Baron held his arm, while he turned an inquiring eye toward his daughter, as if commanding her to deal more frankly with him.

“Father,” said Adelheid, in a voice that shook, in spite of the effort to control her feelings, “I have something im-

portant to communicate, before this acceptance of Herr Steinbach is a matter irrevocably determined."

"Speak freely, my child ; this is a tried friend, and one entitled to know all that concerns us, especially in this affair. Throwing aside all pleasantry, I trust, Adelheid, that we are to have no girlish trifling with a youth like Sigismund ; to whom we owe so much, even to our lives, and in whose behalf we should be ready to sacrifice every feeling of prejudice, or habits—all that we possess, aye, even to our pride."

"All, father?"

"I have said all. I will not take back a letter of the word, though it should rob me of Willading, my rank in the canton, and an ancient name to boot. Am I not right, Gaetano? I place the happiness of the boy above all other considerations, that of Adelheid being understood to be so intimately blended with his. I repeat it, therefore, all."

"It would be well to hear what the young lady has to say, before we urge this affair any further," said the Signor Grimaldi, who, having achieved no conquest over himself, was not quite so exuberant in his exultation as his friend ; observing more calmly, and noting what he saw with the clearness of a cooler-headed and more sagacious man. "I am much in error, or thy daughter has that which is serious to communicate."

The paternal affection of Melchior now took the alarm, and he gave an eager attention to his child. Adelheid returned his evident solicitude by a smile of love, but its painful expression was so unequivocal as to heighten the Baron's fears.

"Art not well, love? It cannot be that we have been deceived—that some peasant's daughter is thought worthy to supplant thee? Ha!—Signor Grimaldi, this matter begins, in sooth, to seem offensive ;—but, old as I am—Well, we shall never know the truth, unless thou speakest frankly—this is a rare business, after all, Gaetano—that a daughter of mine should be repulsed by a hind!"

Adelheid made an imploring gesture for her father to forbear, while she resumed her seat from further inability to stand. The two anxious old men followed her example, in wondering silence.

"Thou dost both the honor and modesty of Sigismund great injustice, father," resumed the maiden, after a pause,

and speaking with a calmness of manner that surprised even herself. "If thou and this excellent and tried friend will give me your attention for a few minutes, nothing shall be concealed."

Her companions listened in wonder, for they plainly saw that the matter was more grave than either had at first imagined. Adelheid paused again, to summon force for the ungrateful duty, and then she succinctly, but clearly, related the substance of Sigismund's communication. Both the listeners eagerly caught each syllable that fell from the quivering lips of the maiden, for she trembled, notwithstanding a struggle to be calm that was almost superhuman, and when her voice ceased they gazed at each other like men suddenly astounded by some dire and totally unexpected calamity. The Baron, in truth, could scarcely believe that he had not been deceived by a defective hearing, for age had begun a little to impair that useful faculty, while his friend admitted the words as one receives impressions of the most revolting and disheartening nature.

"This is a damnable and fearful fact!" muttered the latter, when Adelheid had altogether ceased to speak.

"Did she say that Sigismund is the son of Balthazar, the public headsman of the canton?" asked the father of his friend, in the way that one reluctantly assures himself of some half-comprehended and unwelcome truth—"of Balthazar—of that family accursed!"

"Such is the parentage it has been the will of God to bestow on the preserver of our lives," meekly answered Adelheid.

"Hath the villain dared to steal into my family circle, concealing this disgusting and disgraceful fact! Hath he endeavored to engraft the impurity of his source on the untarnished stock of a noble and ancient family? There is something exceeding mere duplicity in this, Signor Grimaldi. There is a dark and meaning crime."

"There is that which much exceeds our means of remedying, good Melchior. But let us not rashly blame the boy, whose birth is rather to be imputed to him as a misfortune than as a crime. If he were a thousand Balthazars, he has saved all our lives!"

"Thou sayest true—thou sayest no more than the truth. Thou wert always of a more reasonable brain than I, though thy more southern origin would seem to contra-

dict it. Here, then, are all our fine fancies and liberal schemes of generosity blown to the winds !”

“That is not so evident,” returned the Genoese, who had not failed the while to study the countenance of Adelheid, as if he would fully ascertain her secret wishes. “There has been much discourse, fair Adelheid, between thee and the youth on this matter?”

“Signore, there has. I was about to communicate the intentions of my father ; for the circumstances in which we were placed, the weight of our many obligations, the usual distance which rank interposes between the noble and the simply born, perhaps justifies this boldness in a maiden,” she added, though the tell-tale blood revealed her shame. “I was making Sigismund acquainted with my father’s wishes, when he met my confidence by the avowal which I have just related.”

“He deems his birth——?”

“An insuperable barrier to the connection. Sigismund Steinbach, though so little favored in the accident of his origin, is not a beggar to sue for that which his own generous feelings would condemn.”

“And thou?”

Adelheid lowered her eyes, and seemed to reflect on the nature of her answer.

“Thou wilt pardon this curiosity, which may wear too much the aspect of unwarrantable meddling, but my age and ancient friendship, the recent occurrences, and a growing love for all that concerns thee, must plead my excuses. Unless we know thy wishes, daughter, neither Melchior nor I can act as we might wish !”

Adelheid was long and thoughtfully silent. Though every sentiment of her heart, and all that inclination which is the offspring of the warm and poetical illusions of love, tempted her to declare a readiness to sacrifice every other consideration to the engrossing and pure affections of woman, opinion with its iron grip still held her in suspense on the propriety of braving the prejudices of the world. The timidity of that sex which, however ready to make an offering of its most cherished privileges on the shrine of connubial tenderness, shrinks with a keen sensitiveness from the appearance of a forward devotion to the other, had its weight also, nor could a child so pious altogether forget the effect her decision might have on the future happiness of her sole surviving parent.

The Genoese understood the struggle, though he foresaw its termination, and he resumed the discourse himself, partly with the kind wish to give the maiden time to reflect maturely before she answered, and partly following a very natural train of his own thoughts.

"There is naught sure in this fickle state of being," he continued. "Neither the throne, nor riches, nor health, nor even the sacred affections, are secure against change. Well may we pause then and weigh every chance of happiness, ere we take the last and final step in any great or novel measure. Thou knowest the hopes with which I entered life, Melchior, and the chilling disappointments with which my career is likely to close. No youth was born to fairer hopes, nor did Italy know one more joyous than myself, the morning I received the hand of Angiolina; and yet two short years saw all those hopes withered, this joyousness gone, and a cloud thrown across my prospects which has never disappeared. A widowed husband, a childless father, may not prove a bad counsellor, my friend, in a moment when there is so much doubt besetting thee and thine."

"Thy mind naturally returns to thine own unhappy child, poor Gaetano, when there is so much question of the fortunes of mine."

The Signor Grimaldi turned his look on his friend, but the gleam of anguish, which was wont to pass athwart his countenance when his mind was drawn powerfully toward that painful subject, betrayed that he was not just then able to reply.

"We see in all these events," continued the Genoese, as if too full of his subject to restrain his words, "the unsearchable designs of Providence. Here is a youth that is all that a father could desire; worthy in every sense to be the depository of a beloved and only daughter's weal; manly, brave, virtuous, and noble in all but the chances of blood and yet so accursed by the world's opinion that we might scarce venture to name him as the associate of an idle hour, were the fact known that he is the man he has declared himself to be!"

"You put the matter in strong language, Signor Grimaldi," said Adelheid, starting.

"A youth of a form so commanding that a king might exult at the prospect of his crown descending on such a head; of a perfection of strength and masculine excellence

that will almost justify the dangerous exultation of health and vigor; of a reason that is riper than his years; of a virtue of proof; of all the qualities that we respect, and which come of study and not of accident, and yet a youth condemned of men to live under the reproach of their hatred and contempt, or to conceal forever the name of the mother that bore him! Compare this Sigismund with others that may be named; with the high-born and pampered heir of some illustrious house, who riots in men's respect while he shocks men's morals; who presumes on privilege to trifle with the sacred and the just; who lives for self, and that in base enjoyments; who is fitter to be the lunatic's companion than any other's, though destined to rule in the council; who is the type of the wicked, though called to preside over the virtuous; who cannot be esteemed, though entitled to be honored; and let us ask why this is so, what is the wisdom which hath drawn differences so arbitrary, and which, while proclaiming the necessity of justice, so openly, so wantonly, and so ingeniously sets its plainest dictates at defiance?"

"Signore, it should not be thus—God never intended it should be so!"

"While every principle would seem to say that each must stand or fall by his own good or evil deeds, that men are to be honored as they merit, every device of human institutions is exerted to achieve the opposite. This is exalted, because his ancestry is noble; that condemned for no better reason than that he is born vile. Melchior! Melchior! our reason is unhinged by subtleties, and our boasted philosophy and right are no more than unblushing mockeries, at which the very devils laugh!"

"And yet the commandments of God tell us, Gaetano, that the sins of the father shall be visited on the descendants from generation to generation. You of Rome pay not this close attention, perhaps, to sacred writ, but I have heard it said that we have not in Berne a law for which good warranty cannot be found in the holy volume itself!"

"Aye, there are sophists to prove all that they wish. The crimes and follies of the ancestor leave their physical, or even their moral taint, on the child, beyond a question, good Melchior;—but is not this difficult? Are we blasphemously, even impiously, to pretend that God has not sufficiently provided for the punishment of the breaches of his wise ordinances, that we must come forward to sec-

and them by arbitrary and heartless rules of our own? What crime is imputable to the family of this youth beyond that of poverty, which probably drove the first of his race to the execution of their revolting office. There is little in the mien or morals of Sigismund to denote the visitations of Heaven's wise decrees, but there is everything in his present situation to proclaim the injustice of man."

"And dost thou, Gaetano Grimaldi, the ally of so many ancient and illustrious houses—thou, Gaetano Grimaldi, the honored of Genoa—dost thou counsel me to give my only child, the heiress of my lands and name, to the son of the public executioner, nay, to the very heritor of his disgusting duties!"

"There thou hast me on the hip, Melchior; the question is put strongly, and needs reflection for an answer. Oh! why is this Balthazar so rich in offspring, and I so poor? But we will not press the matter; it is an affair of many sides, and should be judged by us as men, as well as nobles. Daughter, thou hast just learned, by the words of thy father, that I am against thee, by position and heritage, for, while I condemn the principle of this wrong, I cannot overlook its effects, and never before did a case of as tangled difficulty, one in which right was so palpably opposed by opinion, present itself for my judgment. Leave us, that we may command ourselves; the required decision exacts much care, and greater mastery of ourselves than I can exercise with that sweet pale face of thine appealing so eloquently to my heart in behalf of the noble boy."

Adelheid arose, and first offering her marble-like brow to the salutation of both her parents, for the ancient friendship and strong sympathies of the Genoese gave him a claim to this appellation in her affections at least, she silently withdrew. As to the conversation which ensued between the old nobles, we momentarily drop the curtain, to proceed to other incidents of our narrative. It may, however, be generally observed that the day passed quietly away, without the occurrence of any event which it is necessary to relate, all in the château, with the exception of the travellers, being principally occupied by the approaching festivities. The Signor Grimaldi sought an occasion to have a long and a confidential communication with Sigismund, who, on his part, carefully avoided being seen again by her who had so great an influence on his feelings, until both had time to recover their self-command.

CHAPTER XIII.

“Hold, hurt him not, for God’s sake ;—he is mad.”

—*Comedy of Errors.*

THE festivals of Bacchus are supposed to have been the models of those long-continued festivities which are still known in Switzerland by the name of the Abbaye des Vignerons.

This fête was originally of a simple and rustic character, being far from possessing the labored ceremonies and classical allegories of a later day, the severity of monkish discipline most probably prohibiting the introduction of allusions to the Heathen mythology, as was afterward practised ; for certain religious communities that were the proprietors of large vineyards in that vicinity appear to have been the first known patrons of the custom. So long as a severe simplicity reigned in the festivities, they were annually observed ; but when heavier expenses and greater preparations became necessary, longer intervals succeeded ; the Abbaye at first causing its festival to become triennial, and subsequently extending the period of vacation to six years. As greater time was obtained for the collection of means and inclination the festival gained in éclat, until it came at length to be a species of jubilee, to which the idle, the curious, and the observant of all the adjacent territories were accustomed to resort in crowds. The town of Vévey profited by the circumstance, the usual motive of interest being enlisted in behalf of the usage, and, down to the epoch of the great European revolution, there would seem to have been an unbroken succession of the fêtes. The occasion to which there has so often been allusion, was one of the regular and long-expected festivals ; and as report had spoken largely of the preparations, the attendance was even more numerous than usual.

Early on the morning of the second day after the arrival of our travellers at the neighboring castle of Blonay, a body of men, dressed in the guise of halberdiers, a species of troops then known in most of the courts of Europe, marched into the great square of Vévey, taking possession of all its centre, and posting its sentries in such a manner as to interdict the usual passages of the place. This was

the preliminary step in the coming festivities ; for this was the spot chosen for the scene of most of the ceremonies of the day. The curious were not long behind the guards, and by the time the sun had fairly arisen above the hills of Fribourg, some thousands of spectators were pressing in and about the avenues of the square, and boats from the opposite shores of Savoy were arriving at each instant, crowded to the water's edge with peasants and their families.

Near the upper end of the square, capacious scaffoldings had been erected to contain those who were privileged by rank, or those who were able to buy honors with the vulgar medium ; while humbler preparations for the less fortunate completed the three sides of a space that was in the form of a parallelogram, and which was intended to receive the actors in the coming scene. The side next the water was unoccupied, though a forest of latine spars, and a platform of decks, more than supplied the deficiency of scaffolding and room. Music was heard, from time to time, intermingled or relieved by those wild Alpine cries which characterize the songs of the mountaineers. The authorities of the town were early afoot, and as is customary with the important agents of small concerns, they were exercising their municipal functions with a bustle, which of itself contained reasonable evidence that they were of no great moment, and a gravity of mien with which the chiefs of a state might have believed it possible to dispense.

The estrade, or stage, erected for the superior class of spectators, was decorated with flags, and a portion near its centre had a fair display of tapestry and silken hangings. The chateau-looking edifice near the bottom of the square, and whose windows, according to a common Swiss and German usage, showed the intermingled stripes that denoted it to be public property, were also gay in colors, for the ensign of the Republic floated over its pointed roofs, and rich silks waved against the walls. This was the official residence of Peter Hofmeister, the functionary whom we have already introduced to the reader.

An hour later, a shot gave the signal for the various *troupes* to appear, and soon after, parties of the different actors arrived in the square. As the little processions approached to the sound of the trumpet or horn, curiosity became more active, and the populace was permitted to

circulate in those portions of the square that were not immediately required for other purposes. About this time, a solitary individual appeared on the stage. He seemed to enjoy peculiar privileges, not only from his situation, but by the loud salutations and noisy welcomes with which he was greeted from the crowd below. It was the good monk of St. Bernard, who, with a bare head, and a joyous, contented face, answered to the several calls of the peasants, most of whom had either bestowed hospitality on the worthy Augustine, in his many journeyings among the charitable of the lower world, or had received it at his hands in the frequent passages of the mountain. These recognitions and greetings spoke well for humanity; for in every instance they wore the air of cordial good-will, and a readiness to do honor to the benevolent character of the religious community that was represented in the person of its clavier or steward.

"Good luck to thee, Father Xavier, and a rich *quête*," cried a burly peasant; "thou hast of late unkindly forgotten Benoit Emery and his. When did a clavier of St. Bernard ever knock at my door, and go away with an empty hand? We look for thee, reverend monk, with thy vessel to-morrow; for the summer has been hot, the grapes are rich, and the wine is beginning to run freely in our tubs. Thou shalt dip without any to look at thee, and, take it of which color thou wilt, thou shalt take it with a welcome."

"Thanks, thanks, generous Benoit; St. Augustine will remember thy favor, and thy fruitful vines will be none the poorer for thy generosity. We ask only that we may give, and on none do we bestow more willingly than on the honest Vaudois, whom may the saints keep in mind for their kindness and good-will."

"Nay, I will have none of thy saints; thou knowest we are St. Calvin's men in Vaud, if there must be any canonized. But what is it to us that thou hearest mass, while we love the simple worship? Are we not equally men? Does not the frost nip the members of Catholic and Protestant the same? or does the avalanche respect one more than the other? I never knew thee or any of thy convent question the frozen traveller of his faith, but all are fed, and warmed, and at need administered to from the pharmacy with brotherly care, and as Christians merit. Whatever thou mayest think of the state of our souls, thou on thy mountain there, no one will deny thy tender services

to our bodies. Say I well, neighbors, or is this only the foolish gossip of old Benoit, who has crossed the Col so often that he has forgotten that our churches have quarrelled, and that the learned will have us go to Heaven by different roads ? ”

A general movement among the people, and a tossing of hands, appeared in support of the truth and popularity of the honest peasant's sentiments, for in that age the hospice of St. Bernard, more exclusively a refuge for the real and poor traveller than at present, enjoyed a merited reputation in all the country round.

“Thou shalt always be welcome on the pass, thou and thy friends, and all others in the shape of men, without other interference in thy opinions than secret prayers,” returned the good-humored and happy-looking clavier, whose round, contented face shone partly in habitual joy, partly in gratification at this public testimonial in favor of the brotherhood, and a little in satisfaction perhaps at the promise of an ample addition to the convent's stores ; for the community of St. Bernard, while so much was going out, had a natural and justifiable desire to see some return for its incessant and unwearied liberality. “Thou wilt not deny us the happiness of praying for those we love, though it happened to be in a manner different from that in which they ask blessings for themselves.”

“Have it thine own way, good canon ; I am none of those who are ready to refuse a favor because it savors of Rome. But what has become of our friend Uberto ? He rarely comes into the valleys, that we are not anxious to see his glossy coat.”

The Augustine gave the customary call, and the mastiff mounted the stage with a grave, deliberate step, as if conscious of the dignity and usefulness of the life he led, and like a dog accustomed to the friendly notice of man. The appearance of this well-known and celebrated brute caused another stir in the throng, many pressing upon the guards to get a nearer view, and a few casting fragments of food from their wallets, as tokens of gratitude and regard. In the midst of this little by-play of good feeling, a dark shaggy animal leaped upon the scaffolding, and very coolly commenced, with an activity that denoted the influence of the keen mountain air on his appetite, picking up the different particles of meat that had, as yet, escaped the eye of Uberto. The intruder was received much in the man-

ner that an unpopular or an offending actor is made to undergo the hostilities of pit and galleries, to revenge some slight or neglect for which he has forgotten or refused to atone. In other words, he was incontinently and mercilessly pelted with such missiles as first presented themselves. The unknown animal, which the reader however will not be slow in recognizing to be the water-dog of *Il Male-detto*, received these unusual visitations with some surprise, and rather awkwardly ; for, in his proper sphere, *Nettuno* had been quite as much accustomed to meet with demonstrations of friendship from the race he so faithfully served as any of the far-famed and petted mastiffs of the convent. After dodging sundry stones and clubs, as well as a pretty close attention to the principal matter in hand would allow, and with a dexterity that did equal credit to his coolness and muscle, a missile of formidable weight took the unfortunate follower of Maso in the side, and sent him howling from the stage. At the next instant, his master was at the throat of the offender, throttling him till he was black in the face.

The unlucky stone had come from Conrad. Forgetful of his assumed character, he had joined in the hue and cry against a dog whose character and service should have been sufficiently known to him, at least, to prove his protection, and had given the cruelest blow of all. It has been already seen that there was little friendship between Maso and the pilgrim, for the former appeared to have an instinctive dislike for the latter's calling, and this little occurrence was not of a character likely to restore the peace between them.

"Thou, too!" cried the Italian, whose blood had mounted at the very first attack on his faithful follower, and which fairly boiled when he witnessed the cowardly and wanton conduct of this new assailant—"art not satisfied with feigning prayers and godliness with the credulous, but thou must even feign enmity to my dog, because it is the fashion to praise the cur of St. Bernard at the expense of all other brutes! Reptile!—dost not dread the arm of an honest man, when raised against thee in just anger?"

"Friends—*Vévaisans*—honorable citizens!" gasped the pilgrim, as the gripe of Maso permitted breath. "I am Conrad, a poor, miserable, repentant pilgrim. Will ye see me murdered for a brute?"

Such a contest could not continue long in such a place.

At first the pressure of the curious, and the great density of the crowd, rather favored the attack of the mariner; but in the end they proved his enemies, by preventing the possibility of escaping from those who were specially charged with the care of the public peace. Luckily for Conrad, for passion had fairly blinded Maso to the consequences of his fury, the halberdiers soon forced their way into the centre of the living mass, and they succeeded in seasonably rescuing him from the deadly gripe of his assailant. Il Maledetto trembled with the reaction of this hot sally, the moment his gripe was forcibly released, and he would have disappeared as soon as possible, had it been the pleasure of those into whose hands he had fallen to permit so politic a step. But now commenced the war of words, and the clamor of voices, which usually succeed, as well as precede, all contests of a popular nature. The officer in charge of this portion of the square questioned; twenty answered in a breath, not only drowning each other's voices, but effectually contradicting all that was said in the way of explanation. One maintained that Conrad had not been content with attacking Maso's dog, but that he had followed up the blow by offering a personal indignity to the master himself; this was the publican in whose house the mariner had taken up his abode, and in which he had been sufficiently liberal in his expenditure fairly to entitle him to the hospitable support of its landlord. Another professed to his readiness to swear that the dog was the property of the pilgrim, being accustomed to carry his wallet, and that Maso, owing to an ancient grudge against both master and beast, had hurled the stone which sent the animal away howling, and had resented a mild remonstrance of its owner in the extraordinary manner that all had seen. This witness was the Neapolitan juggler Bippo, who had much attached himself to the person of Conrad since the adventure of the bark, and who was both ready and willing to affirm anything in behalf of a friend who had so evident need of his testimony, if it were only on the score of boon-companionship. A third declared that the dog belonged truly to the Italian, that the stone had been really hurled by one who stood near the pilgrim, who had been wrongfully accused of the offence by Maso; that the latter had made his attack under a false impression, and richly merited punishment, for the unceremonious manner in which he had

stopped Conrad's breath. This witness was perfectly honest, but of a vulgar and credulous mind. He attributed the original offence to one near that happened to have a bad name, and who was very liable to father every sin that, by possibility, could be laid at his door, as well as some that could not. On the other hand, he had also been duped that morning by the pilgrim's superabundant professions of religious zeal, a circumstance that of itself would have prevented him from detecting Conrad's arm in the air as it cast the stone, and which served greatly to increase his certainty that the first offence came from the luckless wight just alluded to; since they who discriminate under general convictions and popular prejudices, usually heap all the odium they pertinaciously withhold from the lucky and favored, on those who seem fated by general consent to be the common target of the world's darts.

The officer, by the time he had deliberately heard the three principal witnesses, together with the confounding explanations of those who professed to be only half informed in the matter, was utterly at a loss to decide which had been right and which wrong. He came, therefore, to the safe conclusion to send all the parties to the guard-house, including the witnesses, being quite sure that he had hit on an effectual method of visiting the true criminal with punishment, and of admonishing all those who gave evidence in future to have a care of the manner in which they contradicted each other. Just as this equitable decision was pronounced, the sound of a trumpet proclaimed the approach of a division of the principal mummers, if so irreverent a term can be applied to men engaged in a festival as justly renowned as that of the vine-dressers. This announcement greatly quickened the steps of justice, for they who were charged with the execution of her decrees felt the necessity of being prompt, under the penalty of losing an interesting portion of the spectacle. Actuated by this new impulse, which, if not as respectable, was quite as strong, as the desire to do right, the disturbers of the peace, even to those who had shown a quarrelsome temper by telling stories that gave each other the lie, were hurried away in a body, and the public was left in the enjoyment of that tranquillity which, in these perilous times of revolution and changes, is thought to be so necessary to its dignity, so especially favorable to commerce, and so grate-

ful to those whose duty it is to preserve the public peace with as little inconvenience to themselves as possible.

A blast of the trumpet was the signal for a more general movement, for it announced the commencement of the ceremonies. As it will be presently necessary to speak of the different personages who were represented on this joyous occasion, we shall only say here, that group after group of the actors came into the square, each party marching to the sound of music from its particular point of rendezvous to the common centre. The stage now began to fill with the privileged, among whom were many of the high aristocracy of the ruling canton, most of its officials, who were too dignified to be more than complacent spectators of revels like these, many nobles of mark from France and Italy, a few travellers from England—for in that age England was deemed a distant country and sent forth but a few of her *élite* to represent her on such occasions—most of those from the adjoining territories who could afford the time and cost, and who by rank or character were entitled to the distinction, and the wives and families of the local officers who happened to be engaged as actors in the representation. By the time the different parts of the principal procession were assembled in the square, all the seats of the estrade were crowded, with the exception of those reserved for the bailiff and his immediate friends.

CHAPTER XIV.

“So once were ranged the sons of ancient Rome,
A noble show! While Roscius trod the stage.”—COWPER.

, THE day was not yet far advanced, when all the component parts of the grand procession had arrived in the square. Shortly after, a flourish of clarions gave notice of the approach of the authorities. First came the bailiff, filled with the dignity of station, and watching, with a vigilant, but covert eye, every indication of feeling that might prove of interest to his employers, even while he most affected sympathy with the occasion and self-abandonment to the follies of the hour; for Peter Hofmeister owed his long-established favor with the *bürgerschaft* more to a never-slumbering regard to its exclusive interests and its undi-

vided supremacy, than to any particular skill in the art of rendering men comfortable and happy. Next to the worthy bailiff—for apart from an indomitable resolution to maintain the authority of his masters for good or for evil, the Herr Hofmeister merited the appellation of a worthy man—came Roger de Blonay and his guest the Baron de Wilading, marching *pari passu* at the side of the representative of Berne himself. There might have been some question how far the bailiff was satisfied with this arrangement of the difficult point of etiquette, for he issued from his own gate with a sort of sidelong movement, that kept him nearly confronted to the Signor Grimaldi, though it left him the means of choosing his path and of observing the aspect of things in the crowd. At any rate, the Genoese, though apparently occupying a secondary station, had no grounds to complain of indifference to his presence. Most of the observances and not a few of the sallies of honest Peter, who had some local reputation as a joker and a *bel esprit*, as is apt to be the case with your municipal magistrate, more especially when he holds his authority independently of the community with whom he associates, and perhaps as little likely to be the fact when he depends on popular favor for his rank, were addressed to the Signor Grimaldi. Most of these good things were returned in kind, the Genoese meeting the courtesies like a man accustomed to be the object of peculiar attentions, and possibly like one who rather rioted in the impunity from ceremonies and public observation, that he now happened to enjoy. Adelheid, with a maiden of the house of Blonay, closed the little train.

As all commendable diligence was used by the officers of the peace to make way for the bailiff, Herr Hofmeister and his companions were soon in their allotted stations, which, it is scarcely necessary to repeat, were the upper places on the estrade. Peter had seated himself, after returning numerous salutations, for none in a situation to catch his eye neglected so fair an opportunity to show their intimacy with the bailiff, when his wandering glance fell upon the happy visage of Father Xavier. Rising hastily, the bailiff went through a multitude of the formal ceremonies that distinguished the courtesy of the place and period, such as frequent wavings and liftings of the beaver, profound reverences, smiles that seemed to flow from the heart, and a variety of other tokens of extraordinary love

and respect. When all were ended, he resumed his place by the side of Melchior de Willading, with whom he commenced a confidential dialogue.

"We know not, noble *Freiherr*" (he spoke in the vernacular of their common canton), "whether we have most reason to esteem or to disrelish these Augustines. While they do so many Christian acts to the travellers on their mountain yonder, they are devils incarnate in the way of upholding popery and its abominations among the people. Look you, the commonalty—God bless them as they deserve!—have no great skill at doctrinal discussions, and are much disposed to be led away by appearances. Numberless are the miserable dolts who fancy the godliness which is content to pass its time on the top of a frozen hill, doing good, feeding the hungry, dressing the wounds of the fallen and—but thou knowest the manner in which these sayings run—the ignorant, as I was about to add, are but too ready to believe that the religion which leads men to do this, must have some savor of Heaven in it after all!"

"Are they so very wrong, friend Peter, that we were wise to disturb the monks in the enjoyment of a favor that is so fairly earned?"

The bailiff looked askance at his brother burgher, for such was the humble appellation that aristocracy assumed in Berne, appearing desirous of probing the depth of the other's political morals before he spoke more freely.

"Though of a house so honored and trusted, I believe thou art not much accustomed of late to mingle with the council?" he evasively observed.

"Since the heavy losses in my family, of which thou mayst have heard, the care of this sole surviving child has been my principal solace and occupation. I know not whether the frequent and near sight of death among those so tenderly loved may have softened my heart toward the Augustines, but to me theirs seems a self-denying and a right worthy life."

"'Tis doubtless as you say, noble Melchior, and we shall do well to let our love for the holy canons be seen. Ho! Mr. Officer—do us the favor to request the reverend monk of St. Bernard to draw nearer, that the people may learn the esteem in which their patient charities and never-wearying benevolence are held by the lookers-on. As you will have occasion to pass the night beneath the convent's

roof, Herr von Willading, in your journey to Italy, a little honor shown to the honest and painstaking clavier will not be lost on the brotherhood, if these churchmen have even a decent respect for the usages of their fellow-creatures."

Father Xavier took the proffered place, which was nearer to the person of the bailiff than the one he had just quitted, and insomuch the more honorable, with the usual thanks, but with a simplicity which proved that he understood the compliment to be due to the fraternity of which he was a member, and not to himself. This little disposition made, as well as all other preliminary matters properly observed, the bailiff seemed satisfied with himself and his arrangements for the moment.

The reader must imagine the stir in the throng, the importance of the minor agents appointed to marshal the procession, and the mixture of weariness and curiosity that possessed the spectators, while the several parts of so complicated and numerous a train were getting arranged, each in its prescribed order and station. But, as the ceremonies which followed were of a peculiar character, and have an intimate connection with the events of the tale, we shall describe them with a little detail, although the task we have allotted to ourselves is less that of sketching pictures of local usages, and of setting before the reader's imagination scenes of real or fancied antiquarian accuracy, than the exposition of a principle, and the wholesome moral which we have always flattered ourselves might, in a greater or less degree, follow from our labors.

A short time previous to the commencement of the ceremonies, a guard of honor, composed of shepherds, gardeners, mowers, reapers, vine-dressers, escorted by halberdiers and headed by music, had left the square in quest of the abbé, as the regular and permanent presiding officer of the abbaye, or company, is termed. This escort, all the individuals of which were dressed in character, was not long in making its appearance with the officer in question, a warm, substantial citizen and proprietor of the place, who, otherwise attired in the ordinary costume of his class in that age, had decorated his beaver with a waving plume, and, in addition to a staff or baton, wore a floating scarf pendent from his shoulder. This personage, on whom certain judicial functions had devolved, took a convenient position in the front of the stage, and soon made a sign for the officials to proceed with their duties

Twelve vine-dressers led by a chief, each having his person more or less ornamented with garlands of vine-leaves, and bearing other emblems of his calling, marched in a body chanting a song of the fields. They escorted two of their number who had been pronounced the most skilful and successful in cultivating the vineyards of the adjacent côtes. When they reached the front of the estrade, the abbé pronounced a short discourse in honor of the cultivators of the earth in general, after which he digressed into especial eulogiums on the successful candidates—two pleased, abashed, and unpractised peasants, who received the simple prizes with throbbing hearts. This little ceremony observed, amid the eager and delighted gaze of friends, and the oblique and discontented regards of the few whose feelings were too contracted to open to the joys of others, even on this simple and grateful festival, the trumpets sounded again, and the cry was raised to make room.

A large group advanced from among the body of the actors to an open space, of sufficient size and elevation, immediately in front of the stage. When in full view of the multitude, those who composed it arranged themselves in a prescribed and seemly order. They were the officials of Bacchus. The high priest, robed in a sacrificial dress, with flowing beard, and head crowned with the vine, stood foremost, chanting in honor of the craft of the vine-dresser. His song also contained a few apposite allusions to the smiling, blushing candidates. The whole joined in the chorus, though the leader of the band scarce needed the support of any other lungs than those with which he had been very amply furnished by nature.

The hymn ended, a general burst of instrumental music succeeded; and, the followers of Bacchus regaining their allotted station, the general procession began to move, sweeping round the whole area of the square in a manner to pass in order before the bailiff.

The first body in the march was composed of the council of the abbaye, attended by the shepherds and gardeners. One, in an antique costume, and bearing a halberd, acted as marshal. He was succeeded by the two crowned vine-dressers, after whom came the abbé with his counsellors, and large groups of shepherds and shepherdesses, as well as a number of both sexes who toiled in gardens, all attired in costumes suited to the traditions of their respec-

five pursuits. The marshal and the officers of the abbaye moved slowly past, with the gravity and decorum that became their stations, occasionally halting to give time for the evolutions of those who followed ; but the other actors now began in earnest to play their several parts. A group of young shepherdesses, clad in closely fitting vests of sky-blue, with skirts of white, each holding her crook, came forward, dancing and singing songs that imitated the bleatings of their flocks, and all the other sounds familiar to the elevated pasturages of that region. These were soon joined by an equal number of young shepherds, also singing their pastorals, the whole exhibiting an active and merry group of dancers, accustomed to exercise their art on the sward of the Alps ; for in this festival, although we have spoken of the performers as actors, it is not in the literal meaning of the term, since, with few exceptions, none appeared to represent any other calling than that which in truth formed his or her daily occupation. We shall not detain the narrative to say more of this party, than that they formed a less striking exception to the conventional picture of the appearance of those engaged in tending flocks than the truth ordinarily betrays ; and that their buoyant gayety, blooming faces, and unwearied action formed a good introductory preparation for the saltation that was to follow.

The male gardeners appeared in their aprons, carrying spades, rakes, and the other implements of their trade ; the females supporting baskets on their heads filled with rich flowers, vegetables, and fruits. When in front of the bailiff, the young men formed a sort of fascies of their several implements, with a readiness that denoted much study, while the girls arranged their baskets in a circle at its foot. Then, joining hands, the whole whirled around, filling the air with a song peculiar to their pursuits.

During the whole of the preparations of the morning, Adelheid had looked on with a vacant eye, as if her feelings had little connection with that which was passing before her face. It is scarcely necessary to say, that her mind, in spite of herself, wandered to other scenes, and that her truant thoughts were busy with interests very different from those which were here presented to the senses. But, by the time the group of gardeners had passed dancing away, her feelings began to enlist with those who were so evidently pleased with themselves and all around them,

and her father, for the first time that morning, was rewarded for the deep attention with which he watched the play of her features, by an affectionate and natural smile.

"This goes off right merrily, Herr Bailiff," exclaimed the Baron, animated by that encouraging smile, as the blood is quickened by a genial ray of the sun's heat when it has been long chilled and deadened by cold—"This goes off with a joyful will, and is likely to end with credit to thy town! I only wonder that you have not more of this, and monthly. When joy can be had so cheap, it is churlish to deny it to a people."

"We complain not of the levities, noble Freiherr, for your light thinker makes a sober and dutiful subject; but we shall have more of this, and of a far better quality, or our time is wasted. What is thought at Berne, noble Melchior, of the prospects of the Emperor's obtaining a new concession for the levy of troops in our cantons?"

"I cry thy mercy, good Peterchen, but by thy leave we will touch on these matters more at our leisure. Boyish though it seem to thy eyes, so long accustomed to look at matters of state, I do confess that these follies begin to have their entertainment, and may well claim an hour of idleness from him that has nothing better in hand."

Peter Hofmeister ejaculated a little expressively. He then examined the countenance of the Signor Grimaldi, who had given himself to the merriment with the perfect good-will and self-abandonment of a man of strong intellect, and who felt his powers too sensibly to be jealous of appearances. Shrugging his shoulders, like one that was disappointed, the pragmatical bailiff turned his look toward the revellers, in order to detect, if possible, some breach of the usages of the country, that might require official reproof; for Peter was of that class of governors who have an itching to see their fingers stirring even the air that is breathed by the people, lest they should get it of a quality or in a quantity that might prove dangerous to a monopoly which it is now the fashion to call the conservative principle. In the meantime the revels proceeded.

No sooner had the gardeners quitted the arena, than a solemn and imposing train appeared to occupy the sward. Four females marched to the front, bearing an antique altar that was decorated with suitable devices. They were clad in emblematical dresses, and wore garlands of flowers

on their heads. Boys carrying censers preceded an altar that was dedicated to Flora, and her ministering official came after it, mitred and carrying flowers. Like all the priestesses that followed, she was laboriously attired in the robes that denoted her sacred duty. The goddess herself was borne by four females on a throne canopied by flowers, and from whose several parts sweeping festoons of every hue and dye descended to the earth. Haymakers of both sexes, gay and pastoral in their air and attire, succeeded, and a car groaning with the sweet-scented grass of the Alps, accompanied by females bearing rakes, brought up the rear.

The altar and the throne being deposited on the sward, the priestess offered sacrifice, hymning the praise of the goddess with mountain lungs. Then followed the dance of the haymakers, as in the preceding exhibition, and the train went off as before.

"Excellent well, and truer than it could be done by your real pagan!" cried the bailiff, who, in spite of his official longings, began to watch the mummary with a pleased eye. "This beateth greatly our youthful follies in the Genoese and Lombard cardinals, in which, to say truth, there are sometimes seen rare niceties in the way of representing the old deities."

"Is it the usage, friend Hofmeister," demanded the Baron, "to enjoy these admirable pleasantries often here in Vaud?"

"We partake of them, from time to time, as the abbaye desires, and much as thou seest. The honorable Signor Grimaldi—who will pardon me that he gets no better treatment than he receives, and who will not fail to ascribe what, to all who know him, might otherwise pass for inexcusable neglect, to his own desire for privacy—he will tell us, should he be pleased to honor us with his real opinion, that the subject is none the worse for occasions to laugh and be gay. Now, there is Geneva, a town given to subtleties as ingenious and complicated as the machinery of their own watches; it can never have a merry-making without a leaven of disputation and reason, two as damnable ingredients in the public humor as schism in religion, or two minds in a *ménage*. There is not a knave in the city who does not fancy himself a better man than Calvin, and some there are who believe if they are not cardinals, it is merely because the reformed Church does

not relish legs cased in red stockings. By the word of a bailiff! I would not be the ruler, look ye, of such a community, for the hope of becoming Avoyer of Berne itself. Here it is different. We play our antics in the shape of gods and goddesses like sober people, and, when all is over, we go to train our vines, or count our herds, like faithful subjects of the great canton. Do I state the matter fairly to our friends, Baron de Blonay?"

Roger de Blonay bit his lip, for he and his had been of Vaud a thousand years, and he little relished the allusion to the quiet manner in which his countrymen submitted to a compelled and foreign dictation. He bowed a cold acquiescence to the bailiff's statement, however, as if no further answer were needed.

"We have other ceremonies that invite our attention," said Melchior de Willading, who had sufficient acquaintance with his friend's opinions to understand his silence.

The next group that approached was composed of those who lived by the products of the dairy. Two cowherds led their beasts, the monotonous tones of whose heavy bells formed a deep and rural accompaniment to the music that regularly preceded each party, while a train of dairy-girls, and of young mountaineers of the class that tend the herds in the summer pasturages, succeeded, a car loaded with the implements of their calling bringing up the rear. In this little procession, no detail of equipment was wanting. The milking-stool was strapped to the body of the dairyman; one had the peculiarly constructed pail in his hand, while another bore at his back the deep wooden vessel in which milk is carried up and down the precipices to the *châlet*. When they reached the sodden arena, the men commenced milking the cows, the girls set in motion the different processes of the dairy, and the whole united in singing the *Ranz des Vaches* of the district. It is generally and erroneously believed that there is a particular air which is known throughout Switzerland by this name, whereas, in truth, nearly every canton has its own song of the mountains, each varying from the others in the notes, as well as in the words, and we might almost add in the language. The *Ranz des Vaches* of Vaud is in the patois of the country, a dialect that is composed of words of Greek and Latin origin, mingled on a foundation of Celtic. Like our own familiar tune, which was first bestowed in derision, and which a

glorious history has enabled us to continue in pride, the words are far too numerous to be repeated. We shall, however, give the reader a single verse of a song which Swiss feeling has rendered so celebrated, and which is said often to induce the mountaineer in foreign service to desert the mercenary standard and the tame scenes of the towns, to return to the magnificent nature that haunts his waking imagination and embellishes his dreams. It will at once be perceived that the power of this song is chiefly to be found in the recollections to which it gives birth, by recalling the simple charms of rural life, and by reviving the indelible impressions that are made by nature wherever she has laid her hand on the face of the earth with the same majesty as in Switzerland.

Lé zermailli dei Colombette
Dé bon matin, sé san léha—

REFRAIN.

Ha, ah! ha, ah!
Liauba! Liauba! por aria.
Venidé toté,
Bllantz' et naire,
Rodz et motaile,
Dzjouvan' et etro
Dezó ou tzehano,
Io vo z' ario
Dezo ou triembllo,
Io ie triudzo,
Liauba! Liauba! por aria.*

The music of the mountains is peculiar and wild, having most probably received its inspiration from the grandeur of the natural objects. Most of the sounds partake of the

*The cowherds of the Alps
Arise at an early hour.

CHORUS.

Ha, ah! ha, ah!
Liauba! Liauba! in order to milk.
Come all of you,
Black and white,
Red and mottled,
Young and old;
Beneath this oak
I am about to milk you,
Beneath this poplar,
I am about to press,
Liauba! Liauba! in order to milk.

character of echoes, being high-keyed but false notes; such as the rocks send back to the valleys, when the voice is raised above its natural key in order to reach the caverns and savage recesses of inaccessible precipices. Strains like these readily recall the glens and the magnificence amid which they were first heard, and hence, by an irresistible impulse, the mind is led to indulge in the strongest of all its sympathies, those which are mixed with the unalloyed and unsophisticated delights of buoyant childhood.

The herdsmen and dairymaids no sooner uttered the first notes of this magic song, than a deep and breathing stillness pervaded the crowd. As the peculiar strains of the chorus rose on the ear, murmuring echoes issued from among the spectators, and ere the wild intonations could be repeated which accompanied the words "Liauba! Liauba!" a thousand voices were lifted simultaneously, as it were, to greet the surrounding mountains with the salutations of their children. From that moment the remainder of the Ranz des Vaches was a common burst of enthusiasm, the offspring of that national fervor, which forms so strong a link in the social chain, and which is capable of recalling to the bosom that, in other respects, has been hardened by vice and crime, a feeling of some of the purest sentiments of our nature.

The last strain died amidst this general exhibition of healthful feeling. The cowherds and the dairy girls collected their different implements, and resumed their march to the melancholy music of the bells, which formed a deep contrast to the wild notes that had just filled the square.

To these succeeded the followers of Ceres, with the altar, the priestess, and the enthroned goddess, as has been already described in the approach of Flora. Cornucopiæ ornamented the chair of the deity, and the canopy was adorned with the gifts of autumn. The whole was surmounted by a sheaf of wheat. She held the sickle as her sceptre, and a tiara composed of the bearded grain covered her brow. Reapers followed, bearing emblems of the season of abundance, and gleaners closed the train. There was the halt, the chant, the chorus, and the song in praise of the beneficent goddess of autumn, as had been done by the votaries of the deity of flowers. A dance of the reapers and gleaners followed, the threshers flourished their flails, and the whole went their way.

After these came the grand standard of the abbaye, and the vine-dressers, the real objects of the festival succeeded. The laborers of the spring led the advance, the men carrying their picks and spades, and the women vessels to contain the cuttings of the vines. Then came a train bearing baskets loaded with the fruit, in its different degrees of perfection and of every shade of color. Youths holding staves topped with miniature representations of the various utensils known in the culture of the grape, such as the laborer with the tub on his back, the butt, and the vessel that first receives the flowing juice, followed. A great number of men, who brought forward the forge that is used to prepare the tools, closed this part of the exhibition. The song and the dance again succeeded, when the whole disappeared at a signal given by the approaching music of Bacchus. As we now touch upon the most elaborate part of the representation, we seize the interval that is necessary to bring it forward, in order to take breath ourselves.

CHAPTER XV.

“And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine,
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne.”

—*Midsummer Night's Dream.*

“'ODDS my life, but this goes off with a grace, brother Peter!” exclaimed the Baron de Willading, as he followed the vine-dressers in their retreat, with an amused eye—“If we have much more like it, I shall forget the dignity of the bürgerschaft, and turn mummer with the rest, though my good name for wisdom were the forfeit of the folly.”

“That is better said between ourselves than performed before the vulgar eye, honorable Melchior. It would sound ill, of a truth, were these Vaudois to boast that a noble of thy estimation in Berne were thus to forget himself.”

“None of this!—are we not here to be merry, and to laugh, and to be pleased with any folly that offers? A truce, then, to thy official distrusting and superabundant dig-

nity, honest Peterchen," for such was the good-natured name by which the worthy bailiff was most commonly addressed by his friends; "let the tongue freely answer to the heart, as if we were boys rioting together, as was once the case, long ere thou wert thought of for this office, or I knew a sorrowful hour."

"The Signor Grimaldi shall judge between us; I maintain that restraint is necessary to those in high trusts."

"I will decide when the actors have all played their parts," returned the Genoese, smiling; "at present, here cometh one to whom all old soldiers pay homage. We will not fail of respect in so great a presence, on account of a little difference in taste."

Peter Hofmeister was not a small drinker, and as the approach of the god of the cup was announced by a flourish from some twenty instruments made to speak on a key suited to the vault of heaven, he was obliged to reserve his opinions for another time. After the passage of the musicians and a train of the abbaye's servants, for especial honors were paid to the ruby deity, there came three officials of the sacrifice, one leading a goat with gilded horns, while the two others bore the knife and the hatchet. To these succeeded the altar adorned with vines, the incense bearers, and the high-priest of Bacchus, who led the way for the appearance of the youthful god himself. The deity was seated astride on a cask, his head encircled with a garland of generous grapes, bearing a cup in one hand, and a vine-entwined and fruit-crowned sceptre in the other. Four Nubians carried him on their shoulders, while others shaded his form with an appropriate canopy; fauns wearing tiger-skins, and playing their characteristic antics, danced in his train, while twenty laughing and light-footed Bacchantes flourished their instruments, moving in measure in the rear.

A general shout in the multitude preceded the appearance of Silenus, who was sustained in his place on an ass by two blackamoors. The half-empty skins at his side, the vacant laugh, the foolish eye, the lolling tongue, the bloated lip, and the idiotic countenance, gave reason to suspect that there was a better motive for their support than any which belonged to the truth of the representation. Two youths then advanced bearing on a pole a cluster of grapes that nearly descended to the ground, and which was intended to represent the fruit brought from

Canaan by the messengers of Joshua—a symbol much affected by the artists and mummers of the other hemisphere, on occasions suited to its display. A huge vehicle, ycleped the ark of Noah, closed the procession. It held a wine-press, having its workmen embowered among the vines, and it contained the family of the second father of the human race. As it rolled past, traces of the rich liquor were left in the tracks of its wheels.

Then came the sacrifice, the chant, and the dance, as in most of the preceding exhibitions, each of which, like this of Bacchus, had contained allusions to the peculiar habits and attributes of the different deities. The bacchanal that closed the scene was performed in character; the trumpets flourished and the procession departed in the order in which it had arrived.

Peter relented a little from his usual political reserve, as he witnessed these games in honor of a deity to whom he so habitually did practical homage, for it was seldom that this elaborate functionary, who might be termed quite a doctrinaire in his way, composed his senses in sleep without having pretty effectually steeped them in the liquor of the neighboring hills; a habit that was of far more general use among men of his class in that age than in this of ours, which seems so eminently to be the season of sobriety.

"This is not amiss, of a verity," observed the contented bailiff, as the Fauns and Bacchantes moved off the sward, capering and cutting their classical antics with far more agility and zeal than grace. "This looks like the inspiration of good wine, Signor Genoese, and were the truth known, it would be found that the rogue who plays the part of the fat person on the ass—how dost call the knave, noble Melchior?"

"Body o' me! if I am wiser than thyself, worthy bailiff; it is clearly a rogue who can never have done his mummery so expertly, without some aid from the flask."

"'Twill be well to know the fellow's character, for there may be occasion to commend him to the gentlemen of the abbaye, when all is over. Your skilful ruler has two great instruments that he need use with discretion, Baron de Willading, and these are, fear and flattery; and Berne hath no servant more ready to apply both, or either, as there may be necessity, than one of her poor bailiffs that hath not received all his dues from the general opinion, if

truth were spoken. But it is well to be prepared to speak these good people of the abbaye fairly, touching their exploits. Harkee, master halberdier; thou art of Vévey, I think, and a warm citizen in thy every-day character, or my eyes do us both injustice!"

"I am, as you have said, Monsieur le Bailli, a Vévaisan, and one that is well known among our artisans."

"True, that was visible, spite of thy halberd. Thou art, no doubt, rarely gifted, and taught to the letter in these games. Wilt name the character that has just ridden past on the ass—he that hath so well enacted the drunkard, I mean? His name hath gone out of our minds for the moment, though his acting never can, for a better performance of one overcome by liquor is seldom seen."

"Lord keep you! worshipful bailiff, that is Antoine Giraud, the fat butcher of La Tour de Peil, and a better at the cup there is not in all the country of Vaud! No wonder that he hath done his part so readily; for, while the others have been reading in books, or drilling like so many awkward recruits under the schoolmaster, Antoine hath had little more to perform than to dip into the skin at his elbow. When the officers of the abbaye complain, lest he should disturb the ceremonies, he bids them not to make fools of themselves, for every swallow he gives is just so much done in honor of the representation; and he swears, by the creed of Calvin! that there shall be more truth in his acting than in that of any other of the whole party."

"Odds my life! the fellow hath humor as well as good acting in him—this Antoine Giraud! Will you look into the written order they have given us, fair Adelheid, that we may make sure this artisan-halberdier hath not deceived us? We in authority must not trust a Vévaisan too lightly."

"It will be vain, I fear, Herr Bailiff, since the characters, and not the names of the actors, appear in the lists. The man in question represents Silenus I should think, judging from his appearance and all the other circumstances."

"Well, let it be as thou wilt. Silenus himself could not play his own part better than it hath been done by this Antoine Giraud. The fellow would gain gold like water at the court of the Emperor as a mime, were he only advised to resort thither. I warrant you, now, he would do Pluto, or Minerva, or any other god, just as well as he hath done this rogue Silenus!"

The honest admiration of Peter, who, sooth to say, had not much of the learning of the age, as the phrase is, raised a smile on the lip of the beauteous daughter of the Baron, and she glanced a look to catch the eye of Sigismund, toward whom all her secret sympathies, whether of sorrow or of joy, so naturally and so strongly tended. But the averted head, the fixed attention, and the nearly immovable and statue-like attitude in which he stood, showed that a more powerful interest drew his gaze to the next group. Though ignorant of the cause of his intense regard, Adelheid instantly forgot the bailiff, his dogmatism, and his want of erudition, in the wish to examine those who approached.

The more classical portion of the ceremonies was now duly observed. The council of the abbaye intended to close with an exhibition that was more intelligible to the mass of the spectators than anything which had preceded it, since it was addressed to the sympathies and habits of every people, and in all conditions of society. This was the spectacle that so engrossingly attracted the attention of Sigismund. It was termed the procession of the nuptials, and it was now slowly advancing to occupy the space left vacant by the retreat of Antoine Giraud and his companions.

There came in front the customary band, playing a lively air which use has long appropriated to the festivities of Hymen. The lord of the Manor, or, as he was termed, the Baron, and his lady partner led the train, both apparelled in the rich and quaint attire of the period. Six ancient couples, the representatives of happy married lives, followed by a long succession of offspring of every age, including equally the infant at the breast and the husband and wife in the flower of their days, walked next to the noble pair. Then appeared the section of the dwelling, which was made to portray the interior of domestic economy, having its kitchen, its utensils, and most of the useful and necessary objects that may be said to compose the material elements of an humble *ménage*. Within this moiety of a house, one female plied the wheel, and another was occupied in baking. The notary, bearing the register beneath an arm, with hat in hand, and dressed in an exaggerated costume of his profession, strutted in the rear of the two industrious housemaids. His appearance was greeted with a general laugh, for the spectators relished the humor of the caricature with infinite goût

But this sudden and general burst of merriment was as quickly forgotten in the desire to behold the bride and bridegroom, whose station was next to that of the officer of the law. It was understood that these parties were not actors, but that the abbaye had sought out a couple, of corresponding rank and means, who had consented to join their fortunes in reality on the occasion of this great jubilee, thereby lending to it a greater appearance of that genuine joy and festivity which it was the desire of the heads of the association to represent. Such a search had not been made without exciting deep interest in the simple communities which surrounded Vévey. Many requisites had been proclaimed to be necessary in the candidates—such as beauty, modesty, merit, and the submission of her sex, in the bride; and in her partner those qualities which might fairly entitle him to be the repository of the happiness of a maiden so endowed.

Many had been the speculations of the Vévaisans touching the individuals who had been selected to perform these grave and important characters, which, for fidelity of representation, were to outdo that of Silenus himself; but so much care had been taken by the agents of the abbaye to conceal the names of those they had selected, that, until this moment, when disguise was no longer possible, the public was completely in the dark on the interesting point. It was so usual to make matches of this kind on occasions of public rejoicing, and marriages of convenience, as they are not unaptly termed, enter so completely into the habits of all European communities—perhaps we might say of all old communities—that common opinion would not have been violently outraged had it been known that the chosen pair saw each other for the second or third time in the procession, and that they had now presented themselves to take the nuptial vow, as it were, at the sound of the trumpet or beat of drum. Still, it was more usual to consult the inclinations of the parties, since it gave greater zest to the ceremony, and these selections of couples on public occasions were generally supposed to have more than the common interest of marriages, since they were believed to be the means of uniting, through the agency of the rich and powerful, those whom poverty or other adverse circumstances had hitherto kept asunder. Rumor spoke of many an inexorable father who had listened to reason from the mouths of the great, rather than balk the

public humor ; and thousands of pining hearts, among the obscure and simple, are even now gladdened at the approach of some joyous ceremony, which is expected to throw open the gates of the prison to the debtor and the criminal, or that of Hymen to those who are richer in constancy and affection than in any other stores.

A general murmur and a common movement betrayed the lively interest of the spectators, as the principal and real actors in this portion of the ceremonies drew near. Adelheid felt a warm glow on her cheek, and a gentler flow of kindness at her heart when her eye first caught a view of the bride and bridegroom, whom she was fain to believe a faithful pair that a cruel fortune had hitherto kept separate, and who were now willing to brave such strictures as all must encounter who court public attention, in order to receive the reward of their enduring love and self-denial. This sympathy, which was at first rather of an abstract and vague nature, finding its support chiefly in her own peculiar situation and the qualities of her gentle nature, became intensely heightened, however, when she got a better view of the bride. The modest mien, abashed eye, and difficult breathing of the girl, whose personal charms were of an order much superior to those which usually distinguish rustic beauty in those countries in which females are not exempted from the labors of the field, were so natural and winning as to awaken all her interest ; and, with instinctive quickness, the lady of Willading bent her look on the bridegroom, in order to see if one whose appearance was so eloquent in her favor was likely to be happy in her choice. In age, personal appearance, and apparently in condition of life, there was no very great unfitness, though Adelheid fancied that the mien of the maiden announced a better breeding than that of her companion—a difference which she was willing to ascribe, however, to a greater aptitude in her own sex to receive the first impress of the moral seal, than that which belongs to man.

“She is fair,” whispered Adelheid, slightly bending her head toward Sigismund, who stood at her side, “and must deserve her happiness.”

“She is good, and merits a better fate!” muttered the youth, breathing so hard as to render his respiration audible.

The startled Adelheid raised her eyes, and strong but

suppressed agitation was quivering in every lineament of her companion's countenance. The attention of those near was so closely drawn toward the procession, as to allow an instant of unobserved communication.

"Sigismund, this is thy sister!"

"God so cursed her."

"Why has an occasion, public as this, been chosen to wed a maiden of her modesty and manner?"

"Can the daughter of Balthazar be squeamish? Gold, the interest of the abbaye, and the foolish *éclat* of this silly scene, have enabled my father to dispose of his child to yonder mercenary, who has bargained like a Jew in the affair, and who, among other conditions, has required that the true name of his bride shall never be revealed. Are we not honored by a connection which repudiates us even before it is formed!"

The hollow stifled laugh of the young man thrilled on the nerves of his listener, and she ceased the stolen dialogue to return to the subject at a more favorable moment. In the meantime the procession had reached the station in front of the stage, where the mummers had already commenced their rites.

A dozen groomsmen and as many female attendants accompanied the pair who were about to take the nuptial vow. Behind these came the *trousseau* and the *corbeille*; the first being that portion of the dowry of the bride which applies to her personal wants, and the last is an offering of the husband, and is figuratively supposed to be the pledge of the strength of his passion. In the present instance the *trousseau* was so ample, and betokened so much liberality, as well as means, on the part of the friends of a maiden who would consent to become a wife in a ceremony so public, as to create general surprise; while, on the other hand, a solitary chain of gold, of rustic fashion, and far more in consonance with the occasion, was the sole tribute of the swain. This difference between the liberality of the friends of the bride, and that of the individual, who, judging from appearances, had much the most reason to show his satisfaction, did not fail to give rise to many comments. They ended, as most comments do, by deductions drawn against the weaker and least defended of the parties. The general conclusion was so uncharitable as to infer that a girl thus bestowed must be under peculiar disadvantages, else would there have been a greater equality between the gifts; an

inference that was sufficiently true, though cruelly unjust to its modest but unconscious subject.

While speculations of this nature were rife among the spectators, the actors in the ceremony began their dances, which were distinguished by the quaint formality that belonged to the politeness of the age. The songs that succeeded were in honor of Hymen and his votaries, and a few couplets that extolled the virtues and beauty of the bride were chanted in chorus. A sweep appeared at the chimney-top, raising his cry, in allusion to the business of the ménage, and then all moved away, as had been done by those who had preceded them. A guard of halberdiers closed the procession.

That part of the mummeries which was to be enacted in front of the estrade was now ended for the moment, and the different groups proceeded to various other stations in the town, where the ceremonies were to be repeated for the benefit of those who, by reason of the throng, had not been able to get a near view of what had passed in the square. Most of the privileged profited by the pause to leave their seats, and to seek such relaxation as the confinement rendered agreeable. Among those who entirely quitted the square were the bailiff and his friends, who strolled toward the promenade on the lake-shore, holding discourse, in which there was blended much facetious merriment concerning what they had just seen.

The bailiff soon drew his companions around him, in a deep discussion of the nature of the games, during which the Signor Grimaldi betrayed a malicious pleasure in leading on the dogmatic Peter to expose the confusion that existed in his head, touching the characters of sacred and profane history. Even Adelheid was compelled to laugh at the commencement of this ludicrous exhibition, but her thoughts were not long in recurring to a subject in which she felt a nearer and a more tender interest. Sigismund walked thoughtfully at her side, and she profited by the attention of all around them being drawn to the laughable dialogue just mentioned, to renew the subject that had been so lightly touched on before.

"I hope thy fair and modest sister will never have reason to repent her choice," she said, lessening her speed in a manner to widen the distance between herself and those she did not wish to overhear the words, while it brought her nearer to Sigismund ; "'tis a frightful violence to all

maiden feeling to be thus dragged before the eyes of the curious and vulgar, in a scene trying and solemn as that in which she plights her marriage vows !”

“ Poor Christine ! her fate from infancy has been pitiable. A purer or milder spirit than hers, one that more sensitively shrinks from rude collision, does not exist ; and yet, on whichever side she turns her eyes, she meets with appalling prejudices or opinions to drive a gentle nature like hers to madness. It may be a misfortune, Adelheid, to want instruction, and to be fated to pass a life in the depths of ignorance, and in the indulgence of brutal passions, but it is scarcely a blessing to have the mind elevated above the tasks which a cruel and selfish world so frequently imposes.”

“ Thou wast speaking of thy mild and excellent sister——”

“ Well hast thou described her ! Christine is mild, and more than modest—she is meek. But what can meekness itself do to palliate such a calamity ? Desirous of averting the stigma of his family from all he could with prudence, my father caused my sister like myself, to be early taken from the parental home. She was given in charge to strangers, under such circumstances of secrecy, as left her long, perhaps too long, in ignorance of the stock from which she sprang. When maternal pride led my mother to seek her daughter’s society, the mind of Christine was in some measure formed, and she had to endure the humiliation of learning that she was one of a family proscribed. Her gentle spirit, however, soon became reconciled to the truth, at least so far as human observation could penetrate, and, from the moment of the first terrible agony, no one has heard her murmur at the stern decree of Providence. The resignation of that mild girl has ever been a reproach to my own rebellious temper, for, Adelheid, I cannot conceal the truth from thee—I have cursed all that I dared include in my wicked imprecations, in very madness at this blight on my hopes ! Nay, I have even accused my father of injustice, that he did not train me at the side of the block, that I might take a savage pride in that which is now the bane of my existence. Not so with Christine ; she has always warmly returned the affection of our parents, as a daughter should love the author of her being, while I fear I have been repining when I should have loved. Our origin is a curse entailed by the ruthless laws

of the land, and it is not to be attributed to any, at least to none of these later days, as a fault ; and such has ever been the language of my poor sister when she has seen a merit in their wishes to benefit us at the expense of their own natural affection. I would I could imitate her reason and resignation !”

“The view taken by thy sister is that of a female, Sigismund, whose heart is stronger than her pride ; and, what is more, it is just.”

“I deny it not ; ’tis just. But the ill-judged mercy has forever disqualified me to sympathize as I could wish with those to whom I belong. ’Tis an error to draw these broad distinctions between our habits and our affections. Creatures stern as soldiers cannot bend their fancies like pliant twigs, or with the facility of female——”

“Duty,” said Adelheid, gravely, observing that he hesitated.

“If thou wilt, duty. The word has great weight with thy sex, and I do not question that it should have with mine.”

“Thou canst not be wanting in affection for thy father, Sigismund. The manner in which thou interposedst to save his life, when we were in the fearful jeopardy of the tempest, disproves thy words.”

“Heaven forbid that I should be wanting in natural feeling of this sort, and yet, Adelheid, it is horrible not to be able to respect, to love profoundly, those to whom we owe our existence ! Christine in this is far happier than I, an advantage that I doubt not she owes to her simple life, and to the closer intimacies which unites females. I am the son of a headsman ; that bitter fact is never absent from my thoughts when they turn to home and those scenes in which I could so gladly take pleasure. Balthazar may have meant a kindness when he caused me to be trained in habits so different from his own, but, to complete the good work, the veil should never have been removed.”

Adelheid was silent. Though she understood the feelings which controlled one educated so very differently from those to whom he owed his birth, her habits of thought were opposed to the indulgence of any reflections that could unsettle the reverence of the child for its parents.

“One of a heart like thine, Sigismund, cannot hate his mother !” she said, after a pause.

"In this thou dost me no more than justice ; my words have ill represented my thoughts, if they have left such an impression. In cooler moments, I have never considered my birth as more than a misfortune, and my education I deem a reason for additional respect and gratitude to my parents, though it may have disqualified me in some measure to enter deeply into their feelings. Christine herself is not more true, nor of more devoted love, than my poor mother. It is necessary, Adelheid, to see and know that excellent woman in order to understand all the wrongs that the world inflicts by its ruthless usages."

"We will now speak only of thy sister. Has she been here bestowed without regard to her own wishes, Sigismund?"

"I hope not. Christine is meek, but, while neither word nor look betrays the weakness, still she feels the load that crushes us both. She has long accustomed herself to look at all her own merits through the medium of this debasement, and has set too low a value on her own excellent qualities. Much, very much, depends, in this life, on our own habits of self-estimation, Adelheid ; for he who is prepared to admit unworthiness—I speak not of demerit toward God but toward men—will soon become accustomed to familiarity with a standard below his just pretensions, and will end perhaps in being the thing he dreaded. Such has been the consequence of Christine's knowledge of her birth, for, to her meek spirit, there is an appearance of generosity, in overlooking this grand defect, and it has too well prepared her mind to endow the youth with a hundred more of the qualities that are absolutely necessary to her esteem, but which I fear exist only in her own warm fancy."

"This is touching on the most difficult branch of human knowledge," returned Adelheid, smiling sweetly on the agitated brother ; "a just appreciation of ourselves. If there is danger of setting too low a value on our merits, there is also some danger of setting too high ; though I perfectly comprehend the difference you would make between vulgar vanity, and that self-respect which is certainly in some degree necessary to success. But one, like her thou hast described, would scarce yield her affections without good reason to think them well bestowed."

"Adelheid, thou, who hast never felt the world's contempt, cannot understand how winning respect and esteem

can be made to those who pine beneath its weight ! My sister hath so long accustomed herself to think meanly of her hopes, that the appearance of liberality and justice in this youth would have been sufficient of itself to soften her feelings in his favor. I cannot say I think—for Christine will soon be his wife—but will say, I fear that the simple fact of his choosing one that the world persecutes has given him a value in her eyes he might not otherwise have possessed."

"Thou dost not appear to approve of thy sister's choice?"

"I know the details of the disgusting bargain better than poor Christine," answered the young man, speaking between his teeth, like one who repressed bitter emotion. "I was privy to the greedy exactions on the one side, and to the humiliating concessions on the other. Even money could not buy this boon for Balthazar's child, without a condition that the ineffaceable stigma of her birth should be forever concealed."

Adelheid saw, by the cold perspiration that stood on the brow of Sigismund, how intensely he suffered, and she sought an immediate occasion to lead his thoughts to a less disturbing subject. With the readiness of her sex, and with the sensitiveness and delicacy of a woman that sincerely loved, she found means to effect the charitable purpose, without again alarming his pride. She succeeded so far in calming his feelings, that when they rejoined their companions, the manner of the young man had entirely regained the quiet and proud composure in which he appeared to take refuge against the consciousness of the blot that darkened his hopes, frequently rendering life itself a burden nearly too heavy to be borne.

CHAPTER XVI.

"—Come apace, good Audrey, I will fetch
Up your goats, Audrey : and how, Audrey ? am
I the man yet ? Doth my simple features content
You ?"

—*As You Like It.*

WHILE the mummeries related were exhibiting in the great square, Maso, Pippo, Conrad, and the others concerned in the little disturbance connected with the affair of

the dog, were eating their discontent within the walls of the guard-house. Vévey had several squares, and the various ceremonies of the gods and demigods were now to be repeated in the smaller areas. On one of the latter stand the town-house and prison. The offenders in question had been summarily transferred to the jail, in obedience to the command of the officer charged with the preservation of the peace. By an act of grace, however, that properly belonged to the day as well as to the character of the offence, the prisoners were permitted to occupy a part of the edifice that commanded a view of the square, and consequently were not precluded from all participation in the joyousness of the festivities. This indulgence had been accorded on the condition that the parties should cease their wrangling, and otherwise conduct themselves in a way not to bring scandal on the exhibition in which the pride of every Vévaisan was so deeply enlisted. All the captives, the innocent as well as the guilty, gladly subscribed to the terms; for they found themselves in a temporary duress which did not admit of any fair argument of the merits of the case, and there is no leveller so effectual as a common misfortune.

The anger of Maso, though sudden and violent, the effect of a hot temperament, had quickly subsided in a calm which more probably belonged to his education and opinions, in all of which he was much superior to his profligate antagonist. Contempt, therefore, soon took the place of resentment; and though too much accustomed to rude contact with men of the pilgrim's class to be ashamed of what had occurred, the mariner strove to forget the occurrence. It was one of those moral disturbances to which he was scarcely less used, than he was accustomed to encounter physical contests of the elements like that in which he had lately rendered so essential service on the *Leman*.

"Give me thy hand, Conrad," he said, with the frank forgiveness which is apt to distinguish the reconciliation of men who pass their lives among the violent, but sometimes ennobling scenes of adventure and lawlessness. "Thou hast thy humors and habits, and I have mine. If thou findest this trafficking in penances and prayers to thy fancy, follow the trade, for Heaven's sake, and leave me and my dog to live by other means."

"Thou oughtst to have bethought thee how much reason we pilgrims have to prize the mastiffs of the mountains,"

answered Conrad, "and how likely it was to stir my blood to see another cur devouring that which was intended for old Uberto. Thou hast never toiled up the sides of St. Bernard, friend Maso, loaded with the sins of a whole parish, to say nothing of thine own, and therefore canst not know the value of these brutes who so often stand between us pilgrims and a grave of snow."

Il Maledetto smiled grimly, and muttered a sentence between his teeth; for, in perfect consonance with the frank lawlessness of his own life, there was a reckless honesty in his nature, which caused him to despise hypocrisy as unworthy of the bold attributes of manhood.

"Have it as thou wilt, pious Conrad," he said sneeringly, "so there be peace between us. I am, as thou knowest, an Italian, and though we of the south seek revenge occasionally of those who wrong us, it is not often that we do violence after giving a willing palm—I trust ye of Germany are no less honest?"

"May the Virgin be deaf to every ave I have sworn to repeat, and the good fathers of Loretto refuse absolution, if I think more of it! 'Twas but the gripe of a throat, and I am not so tender in that part of the body as to fear it is to be the forerunner of a closer squeeze. Didst ever hear of a churchman that suffered in this way?"

"Men often escape with less than their deserts," Maso dryly answered. "Well, fortune, or the saints, or Calvin, or whatever power most suits your tastes, good friends, has at length put a roof over our heads,—an honor that rarely arrives to most of us, if I may judge by appearances and some little knowledge of the different trades we follow. Thou wilt have a fair occasion to suffer Policinello to rest from his uneasy antics, Pippo, while his master breathes the air through a window for the first time in many a day, as I will answer."

The Neapolitan had no difficulty in laughing at this sally; for his was a nature that took all things pleasantly, though it took nothing under the corrective of principle or a respect for the rights of others.

"Were this Napoli, with her gentle sky and hot volcano," he said, smiling at the allusion, "no one would have less relish for a roof than myself."

"Thou wast born beneath the arch of some Duca's gateway," returned Maso, with a sort of reckless sarcasm that as often cut his friends as his enemies; "thou wilt prob-

ably die in the hospital of the poor, and wilt surely be shot from the death-cart into one of the daily holes of thy Campo Santo among a goodly company of Christians, in which arms and legs will be thrown at random like jack-straws, and the wisest among ye all will be puzzled to tell his own limbs from those of his neighbors, at the sound of the last trumpet."

"Am I a dog, to meet this end?" demanded Pippo, fiercely—"or that I should not know my own bones from those of some infidel rascal who may happen to be my neighbor?"

"We have had one disturbance about brutes, let us not have another," sarcastically rejoined Il Maledetto. "Princes and nobles," he added, with affected gravity, "we are here bound by the heels during the good pleasure of those who rule in Vévey; the wisest course will be to pass the time in good humor with each other, and as pleasantly as our condition will allow. The reverend Conrad shall have all the honors of a cardinal, Pippo shall have the led horse at his funeral, and as for these worthy Vaudois, who, no doubt, are men of substance in their way, they shall be bailiffs sent by Berne to rule between the four walls of our palace! Life is but a graver sort of mummery, gentlemen, and the second of its rarest secrets is to make others fancy us what we wish to appear—the first being, without question, the faculty of deceiving ourselves. Now each one has only to imagine that he is the high personage I have just named, and the most difficult part of the work is achieved to his hands."

"Thou hast forgotten to name thine own quality," cried Pippo, who was too much used to buffoonery not to relish the whim of Maso, and who, with Neapolitan fickleness, forgot his anger the instant he had given it vent.

"I will represent the sapient public, and, being well disposed to be duped, the whole job is complete. Practice away, worthies, and ye shall see with what open eyes and wide gullet I am ready to admire and swallow all your philosophy."

This sally produced a hearty laugh, which rarely fails to establish momentary good-fellowship. The Vaudois, who had the thirsty propensities of mountaineers, ordered wine, and, as their guardians looked upon their confinement more as a measure of temporary policy than of serious moment, the command was obeyed. In a short time, this

little group of worldlings were making the best of circumstances, by calling in the aid of physical stimulants to cheer their solitude. As they washed their throats with the liquor, which was both good and cheap, and by consequence doubly agreeable, the true characters of the different individuals began to show themselves in stronger colors.

The peasants of Vaud, of whom there were three, and all of the lowest class, became confused and dull in their faculties, though louder and more vehement in speech, each man appearing to balance the increasing infirmities of his reason by stronger physical demonstrations of folly.

Conrad, the pilgrim, threw aside the mask entirely, if indeed so thin a veil as that he ordinarily wore when not in the presence of his employers deserved such a name, and appeared the miscreant he truly was—a strange admixture of cowardly superstition (for few meddle with superstition without getting more or less entangled in its meshes), of low cunning, and of the most abject and gross sensuality and vice. The invention and wit of Pippo, at all times ready and ingenious, gained increased powers, but the torrent of animal spirits that were let loose by his potations swept before it all reserve, and he scarce opened his mouth but to betray the thoughts of a man long practised in frauds and all other evil designs on the rights of his fellow creatures. On Maso the wine produced an effect that might almost be termed characteristic, and which it is in some sort germane to the moral of the tale to describe.

Il Maledetto had indulged freely and with apparent recklessness in the frequent draughts. He was long familiarized to the habits of this wild and uncouth fellowship, and a singular sentiment, that men of his class choose to call honor, and which perhaps deserves the name as much as half of the principles that are described by the same appellation, prevented him from refusing to incur an equal risk in the common assault on their faculties, inducing him to swallow his full share of the intoxicating fluid as the cup passed from one reeking mouth to another. He liked the wine, too, and tasted its perfume, and cherished its glowing influence, with the perfect good-will of a man who knew how to profit by the accident which placed such generous liquor at his command. He had also his designs in wishing to unmask his companions, and he thought the moment favorable to such an intention. In addition to

these motives, Maso had his especial reasons for being uneasy at finding himself in the hands of the authorities, and he was not sorry to bring about a state of things that might lead to his being confounded with the others in a group of vulgar devotees of Bacchus.

But Maso yielded to the common disposition in a manner peculiar to himself. His eyes became even more lustrous than usual, his face reddened, and his voice even grew thick, while his senses retained their powers. His reason, instead of giving way, like those of the men around him, rather brightened under the excitement, as if it foresaw the danger it incurred, and the greater necessity there existed for vigilance. Though born in a southern clime, he was saturnine and cold when unexcited, and such temperaments rather gain their tone than lose their powers by stimulants under which men of feebler organizations sink. He had passed his life amid wild adventure and in scenes of peril which suited such a disposition, and it most probably required either some strong motive of danger, like that of the tempest on the *Leman*, or a stimulant of another quality, to draw out the latent properties of his mind, which so well fitted him to lead when others were the most disposed to follow. He was, therefore, without fear for himself while he aroused his companions; and he was free of his purse, which did not, however, appear to be sufficiently stored to answer very heavy demands, by ordering cup after cup to supply the place of those which were so quickly drained to the dregs. In this manner an hour or two passed swiftly, they who were charged with the care of the jolly party in the town-house being much more occupied in noting the festivities without, than those within, the prison.

"Thou hast a merry life of it, honest Pippo," cried Conrad, with swimming eyes, answering a remark of the buffoon. "Thou art but a laugh at the best, and wilt go through the world grinning and making others grin. Thy Policinello is a rare fellow, and I never meet one of thy set that weary legs and sore feet are not forgotten in his fooleries!"

"Corpo di Bacco!—I wish this were so; but thou hast much the best of the matter, even in the way of amusement, reverend pilgrim, though to the looker-on it would seem otherwise. The difference between us, pious Conrad, is just this—that thou laughest in thy sleeve without seem-

ing to be merry, whereas I yawn ready to split my jaws while I seem to be dying with fun. Your often-told joke is a bad companion, and gets at last to be as gloomy as a dirge. Wine can be swallowed but once, and laughter will not come forever for the same folly. Cospetto! I would give the earnings of a year for a set of new jokes, such as might come fresh from the wit of one who never saw a mountebank, and are not worn threadbare with being rubbed against the brains of all the jokers in Europe."

"There was a wise man of old, of whom it is not probable that any of you have ever heard," observed Maso, "who has said that there was nothing new under the sun."

"He who said that never tasted of this liquor, which is as raw as if it were still running from the press," rejoined the pilgrim. "Knave, dost think that we are unknowing in these matters, that thou darest bring a pot of such lees to men of our quality? Go to, and see that thou doest us better justice in the next?"

"The wine is the same as that which first pleased you, but it is the nature of drunkenness to change the palate; and therein Solomon was right as in all other points," coolly remarked Il Maledetto. "Nay, friend, thou wilt scarce bring thy liquors again to those who do not know how to do them proper honor."

Maso thrust the lad who served them from the room, and he slipped a small coin into his hand, ordering him not to return. Inebriety had made sufficient ravages for his ends, and he was now desirous of stopping further excesses.

"Here come the mummers—gods and goddesses, shepherds and their lasses, and all the other pleasantries to keep us in humor! To do these Vévaisans justice, they treat us rarely; for ye see they send their players to amuse our retirement!"

"Wine! liquor! raw or ripe, bring us liquor!" roared Conrad, Pippo, and their pot-companions, who were much too drunk to detect the agency of Maso in defeating their wishes, though they were just drunk enough to fancy that what he said of the attention of the authorities was not only true but merited.

"How now, Pippo! art ashamed to be outdone in thine own craft, that thou bellowest for wine at the moment when the actors have come into the square to exhibit their skill?" cried the mariner. "Truly, we shall have a mean opinion of thy merit, if thou art afraid to meet a few

Vaudois peasants in thy trade,—and thou a buffoon of Napoli!”

Pippo swore with pot-oaths that he defied the cleverest of Switzerland; for that he had not only acted on every mall and mole of Italy, but that he had exhibited in private before princes and cardinals, and that he had no superior on either side of the Alps. Maso profited by his advantage, and, by applying fresh goads to his vanity, soon succeeded in causing him to forget the wine, and in drawing him, with all the others, to the windows.

The processions, in making the circuit of the city, had now reached the square of the town-house, where the acting and exhibition were repeated, as has been already related in general terms to the reader. There were the officers of the abbaye, the vine-dressers, the shepherds and the shepherdesses, Flora, Ceres, Pales, and Bacchus, with all the others, attended by their several trains, and borne in state as became their high attributes. Silenus rolled from his ass, to the great joy of a thousand shouting blackguards, and to the infinite scandal of the prisoners at the windows, the latter affirming to a man that there was no acting in the case, but that the demigod was shamefully under the influence of too many potations that had been swallowed in his own honor.

We shall not go over the details of these scenes, which all who have ever witnessed a public celebration will readily imagine, nor is it necessary to record the different sallies of wit that, under the inspiration of the warm wines of Vévey and the excitement of the revels, issued from the group that clustered around the windows of the prison. All who have ever listened to low humor, that is rather deadened than quickened by liquor, will understand their character, and they who have not will scarcely be losers by the omission.

At length the different allegories drawn from the heathen mythology ended, and the procession of the nuptials came into the square. The meek and gentle Christine had appeared nowhere that day without awakening strong sympathy in her youth, beauty, and apparent innocence. Murmurs of approbation accompanied her steps, and the maiden, more accustomed to her situation, began to feel, probably for the first time since she had known the secret of her origin, something like that security which is an indispensable accompaniment of happiness. Long used to

think of herself as one proscribed of opinion, and educated in the retirement suited to the views of her parents, the praises that reached her ear could not but be grateful, and they went warm and cheeringly to her heart, in spite of the sense of apprehension and uneasiness that had so long harbored there. Throughout the whole of the day, until now, she had scarce dared to turn her eyes to her future husband,—him who, in her simple and single-minded judgment, had braved prejudice to do justice to her worth ; but, as the applause, which had been hitherto suppressed, broke out in loud acclamations in the square of the town-house, the color mantled brightly on her cheek, and she looked with modest pride at her companion, as if she would say in the silent appeal, that his generous choice would not go entirely without its reward. The crowd responded to the sentiment, and never did votaries of Hymen approach the altar seemingly under happier auspices.

The influence of innocence and beauty is universal. Even the unprincipled and half-intoxicated prisoners were loud in praise of the gentle Christine. One praised her modesty, another extolled her personal appearance, and all united with the multitude in shouting to her honor. The blood of the bridegroom began to quicken, and, by the time the train had halted in the open space near the building, immediately beneath the windows occupied by Maso and his fellows, he was looking about him in the exultation of a vulgar mind, which finds its delight in, as it is apt to form its judgments from, the suffrages of others.

"Here is a grand and beautiful festa!" said the hic-coughing Pippo, "and a most willing bride! San Gennaro bless thee, bella sposina, and the worthy man who is the stem of so fair a rose! Send us wine, generous groom and happy bride, that we may drink to the health of thee and thine!"

Christine changed color, and looked furtively around, for they who lie under the weight of the world's displeasure, though innocent, are sensitively jealous of allusions to the sore points in their histories. The feeling communicated itself to her companion, who threw distrustful glances at the crowd, in order to ascertain if the secret of his bride's birth were not discovered.

"A braver festa never honored an Italian corso," continued the Neapolitan, whose head was running on his

own fancies, without troubling itself about the apprehensions and wishes of others. "A gallant array and a fair bride! Send us wine, felicissimi sposi, that we may drink to your eternal fame and happiness! Happy the father that calls thee daughter, bella sposa, and most honored the mother that bare so excellent a child! Scellerati, ye of the crowd, why do ye not bear the worthy parents in your arms, that all may see and do homage to the honorable roots of so rich a branch! Send us wine, buona gente, send us cups of merry wine!"

The cries and the figurative language of Pippo attracted the attention of the multitude, who were additionally amused by the mixture of dialects in which he uttered his appeals. The least important trifles, by giving a new direction to popular sympathies, frequently become the parents of grave events. The crowd, which followed the train of Hymen, had begun to weary with the repetition of the same ceremonies, and it now gladly lent itself to the episode of the felicitations and entreaties of the half-intoxicated Neapolitan.

"Come forth, and act the father of the happy bride, thyself, reverend and grave stranger," cried one in derision, from the throng. "So excellent an example will descend to thy children's children, in blessings on thy line."

A shout of laughter rewarded this retort. It put the quick-witted Neapolitan on his mettle, to produce a prompt and suitable reply.

"My blessing on the blushing rose!" he answered in an instant. "There are worse parents than Pippo, for he who lives by making others laugh deserves well of men, whereas there is your medico, who eats the bread of colics, and rheumatisms, and other foul diseases, of which he pretends to be the enemy, though San Gennaro to aid!—who is there so silly, as not to see that the knavish doctor and the knavish distemper play into each other's hands, as readily as Policinello and the monkey."

"Hast thou another worse than thyself that can be named?" cried he of the crowd.

"A score, and thou shalt be of the number. My blessing on the fair bride! thrice happy is she that hath a right to receive the benediction from one of so honest life as the merry Pippo. Speak not I the truth, figliola?"

Christine perceived that the hand of her companion was coldly releasing her own, and she felt the creeping sensa-

tion of the blood, which is the common attendant of extreme and humiliating shame. Still she bore up against the weakness, with that deep reliance on the justice of others which is usually the most strongly seated in those who are the most innocent; and she followed the procession, in its circuit, with a step whose trembling was mistaken for no more than the embarrassment natural to her situation.

At this moment, as the mummers were wheeling past the town-house, and the air was filled with music, while a general movement stirred the multitude, a cry of alarm arose in the building. It was immediately succeeded by such a rush of bodies toward the spot, as indicates, in a throng, a sudden and general interest in some new and extraordinary event.

The crowd was beaten back and dispersed, the procession had disappeared, and there was an unusual appearance of activity and mystery among the officials of the place, before the cause of this disturbance began to be whispered among the few who remained in the square. The rumor ran that one of the prisoners, an athletic Italian mariner, had profited by the attention of all the other guardians of the place being occupied by the ceremonies, to knock down the solitary sentinel and to effect his escape, followed by all the drunkards who were able to run.

The evasion of a few lawless blackguards from their prison was not an event likely long to divert the attention of the curious from the amusements of the day, especially as it was understood that their confinement would have terminated of itself with the setting sun. But when the fact was communicated to Peter Hofmeister, the sturdy bailiff swore fifty harsh oaths at the impudence of the knaves, at the carelessness of their keepers, and in honor of the good cause of justice in general. After which he incontinently commanded that the runaways should be apprehended. This material part of the process achieved, he moreover ordered that they should be brought forthwith into his presence, even should he be engaged in the most serious of the ceremonies of the day. The voice of Peter speaking in anger was not likely to be unheard, and the stern mandate had scarcely issued from his lips, when a dozen of the common thief-takers of Vaud set about the affair in good earnest, and with the best possible

intentions to effect their object. In the meantime the sports continued, and, as the day drew on, and the hour for the banquet approached, the good people began to collect once more in the great square to witness the closing scenes, and to be present at the nuptial benediction, which was to be pronounced over Jacques Colis and Christine by a real servitor of the altar, as the last and most important of the ceremonies of that eventful day.

CHAPTER XVII.

“Ay, marry ; now unmuzzle your wisdom.”—*Rosalind.*

THE hour of noon was past, when the stage was a second time filled with the privileged. The multitude was again disposed around the area of the square, and the bailiff and his friends once more occupied the seats of honor in the centre of the long estrade. Procession after procession now began to reappear, for all had made the circuit of the city, and each had repeated its mummeries so often that the actors grew weary of their sports. Still, as the several groups came again into the high presence of the bailiff and the élite not only of their own country but of so many others, pride overcame fatigue, and the songs and dances were renewed with the necessary appearance of good will and zeal. Peter Hofmeister and divers others of the magistrates of the canton, were particularly loud in their plaudits on this repetition of the games, for, by a process that will be easily understood, they, who had been reveling and taking their potations in the marquees and booths while the mummers were absent, were more than qualified to supply the deficiencies of the actors by the warmth and exuberance of their own warmed imaginations. The bailiff, in particular, as became his high office and determined character, was unusually talkative and decided, both as respects the criticisms and encomiums he uttered on the various performances, making as light of his own peculiar qualifications to deal with the subject as if he were a common hack-reviewer of our own times, who is known to keep in view the quantity rather than the quality of his remarks, and the stipulated price he is to receive per line. Indeed the parallel would hold good in more respects

than that of knowledge, for his language was unusually captious and supercilious, his tone authoritative, and his motive the desire to exhibit his own endowments rather than the wish he affected to manifest of setting forth the excellences of others. His speeches were more frequently than ever directed to the Signor Grimaldi, for whom there had suddenly arisen in his mind a still stronger gusto than that he had so liberally manifested, and which had already drawn so much attention to the deportment of this pleasing but modest stranger. Still, he never failed to compel all, within reach of a reasonable exercise of his voice, to listen to his oracles.

"Those that have passed, Brother Melchior," said the bailiff, addressing the Baron de Willading in the fraternal style of the *bürgerschaft*, while his eye was directed to the Genoese, in whom in reality he wished to excite admiration for his readiness in Heathen lore, "are no more than shepherds and shepherdesses of our mountains, and none of your gods and demigods, the former of which are to be known in this ceremony from all others by the fact that they are carried on men's shoulders, and the latter that they ride on asses, or have other conveniences natural to their wants. Ah! here we have the higher orders of the mummers in person—this comely creature is, in reality, Mariette Marron, of this country, as strapping a wench as there is in Vaud, and as impudent—but no matter! She is now the Priestess of Flora, and I'll warrant you there is not a horn in all our valleys that will bring a louder echo out of the rocks than this very priestess will raise with her single throat! That yonder on the throne is Flora herself, represented by a comely young woman, the daughter of a warm citizen here in Vévey, and one able to give her all the equipments she bears, without taxing the abbaye a doit. I warrant you that every flower about her was culled from their own garden!"

"Thou treatest the poetry of the ceremonies with so little respect, good Peterchen, that the goddess and her train dwindle into little more than vine-dressers and milkmaids beneath thy tongue."

"Of Heaven's sake, friend Melchior," interrupted the amused Genoese, "do not rob us of the advantage of the worthy bailiff's graphic remarks. Your Heathen may be well enough in his way, but surely he is none the worse for a few notes and illustrations that would do credit to a

Doctor of Padova. I entreat you to continue, learned Peter, that we strangers may lose none of the niceties of the exhibition."

"Thou seest, Baron," returned the well-warmed bailiff, with a look of triumph, "a little explanation can never injure a good thing, though it were even the law itself. Ah! yon is Ceres and her company, and a goodly train they appear! These are the harvest-men and harvest-women, who represent the abundance of our country of Vaud, Signor Grimaldi, which, truth to say, is a fat land, and worthy of the allegory. These knaves, with the stools strapped to their nether parts, and carrying tubs, are cowherds, and all the others are more or less concerned with the dairy. Ceres was a personage of importance among the ancients, beyond dispute, as may be seen by the manner in which she is backed by the landed interest. There is no solid respectability, Herr von Willading, that is not fairly bottomed on broad lands. Ye perceive that the goddess sits on a throne whose ornaments are all taken from the earth; a sheaf of wheat tops the canopy; rich ears of generous grain are her jewels, and her sceptre is the sickle. These are but allegories, Signor Grimaldi, but they are illusions that give birth to wholesome thoughts in the prudent. There is no science that may not catch a hint from our games; politics, religion, or law—'tis all the same for the well-disposed and cunning."

"An ingenious scholar might even find an argument for the *bürgerschaft* in an allegory that is less clear," returned the amused Genoese. "But you have overlooked, signor bailiff, the instrument that Ceres carries in the other hand, and which is full to overflowing with the fruits of the earth;—that which so much resembles a bullock's horn, I mean."

"That is, out of question, some one of the utensils of the ancients; perhaps a milking vessel in use among the gods and goddesses, for your deities of old were no bad housewives, and made a merit of their economy; and Ceres here, as is seen, is not ashamed of a useful occupation. By my faith, but this affair has been gotten up with a very creditable attention to the moral! But our dairy-people are about to give us some of their airs."

Peterchen now put a stop to his classic lore, while the followers of Ceres arranged themselves in order, and began to sing. The contagious and wild melody of the Ranz

des Vaches rose in the square, and soon drew the absorbed and delighted attention of all within hearing, which, to say the truth, was little less than all who were within the limits of the town, for the crowd chiming in with the more regular artists, a sort of musical enthusiasm seized upon all present who came of Vaud and her valleys. The dogmatical but well-meaning bailiff, though usually jealous of his Bernese origin, and alive on system to the necessity of preserving the superiority of the great canton by all the common observances of dignity and reserve, yielded to the general movement, and shouted with the rest, under favor of a pair of lungs that nature had admirably fitted to sustain the chorus of a mountain song. This condescension in the deputy of Berne was often spoken of afterward with admiration, the simple-minded and credulous ascribing the exaltation of Peterchen to a generous warmth in their happiness and interests, while the more wary and observant were apt to impute the musical excess to a previous excess of another character, in which the wines of the neighboring côtes were fairly entitled to come in for a full share of the merit. Those who were nearest the bailiff were secretly much diverted with his awkward attempts at graciousness, which one fair and witty Vaudoise likened to the antics of one of the celebrated animals that are still fostered in the city which ruled so much of Switzerland, and from whom, indeed, the town and canton are both vulgarly supposed to have derived their common name ; for, while the authority of Berne weighed so imperiously and heavily on its subsidiary countries, as is usual in such cases, the people of the latter were much addicted to taking an impotent revenge by whispering the pleasantest sarcasms they could invent against their masters. Notwithstanding this and many more criticisms on his performance, the bailiff enacted his part in the representation to his own entire satisfaction ; and he resumed his seat with a consciousness of having at least merited the applause of the people, for having entered with so much spirit into their games, and with the hope that this act of grace might be the means of causing them to forget some fifty or a hundred of his other acts, which certainly had not possessed the same melodious and companionable features.

After this achievement the bailiff was reasonably quiet, until Bacchus and his train again entered the square. At the appearance of the laughing urchin who bestrode the

cask, he resumed his dissertations with a confidence that all are apt to feel who are about to treat on a subject with which they have had occasion to be familiar.

"This is the god of good liquor," said Peterchen, always speaking to any one who would listen, although, by an instinct of respect, he chiefly preferred favoring the Signor Grimaldi with his remarks, "as may plainly be seen by his seat; and these are dancing attendants, to show that wine gladdens the heart;—yonder is the press at work, extracting the juices, and that huge cluster is to represent the grapes which the messengers of Joshua brought back from Canaan when sent to spy out the land, a history which I make no doubt you, signore, in Italy, have at your fingers' ends."

Gaetano Grimaldi looked embarrassed, for, although well skilled in the lore of the heathen mythology, his learning as a male Papist and a laic was not particularly rich in the story of the Christian faith. At first he supposed that the bailiff had merely blundered in his account of the mythology, but, taxing his memory a little, he recovered some faint glimpses of the truth, a redemption of his character as a book-man, for which he was materially indebted to having seen some celebrated pictures on this very subject, a species of instruction in holy writ that is sufficiently common among those who inhabit the Catholic countries of the other hemisphere.

"Thou surely hast not overlooked the history of the gigantic cluster of grapes, signore!" exclaimed Peterchen, astonished at the apparent hesitation of the Italian. "'Tis the most beautiful of all the legends of the holy book. Ha! as I live, there is the ass without his rider;—what has become of the blackguard Antoine Giraud? The rogue has alighted to swallow a fresh draught from some booth, after draining his own skin to the bottom. This comes of neglect; a sober man, or at least one of a harder head, should have been put to the part;—for, look you, 'tis a character that need stand at least a gallon, since the rehearsals alone are enough to take a common drinker off his centre."

The tongue of the bailiff ran on in accompaniment, during the time that the followers of Bacchus were going through with their songs and pageants, and when they disappeared, it gained a louder key, like the "rolling river that murmuring flows and flows forever," rising again on the ear, after the din of any adventitious noise has ceased.

"Now we may expect the pretty bride and her maids," continued Peterchen, winking at his companions, as the ancient gallant is wont to make a parade of his admiration of the fair; "the solemn ceremony is to be pronounced here, before the authorities, as a suitable termination to this happy day. Ah! my good old friend Melchior, neither of us is the man he was, or these skipping hoydens would not go through their pirouettes without some aid from our arms. —Now dispose of yourselves, friends; for this is to be no acting, but a downright marriage, and it is meet that we keep a graver air. How! what means the movement among the officers?"

Peterchen had interrupted himself, for just at that moment the thief-takers entered the square, in a body, inclosing in their centre a group, who had the mien of captives too evidently to be mistaken for honest men. The bailiff was peculiarly an executive officer; one of that class who believe that the enactment of a law is a point of far less interest than its due fulfilment. Indeed, so far did he push his favorite principle, that he did not hesitate sometimes to suppose shades of meaning in the different ordinances of the great council that existed only in his own brain, but which were, to do him justice, sufficiently convenient to himself in carrying out the constructions which he saw fit to put on his own duties. The appearance of an affair of justice was unfortunate for the progress of the ceremonies, Peterchen having some such relish for the punishment of rogues, and more especially for such as seemed to be an eternal reproach to the action of the Bernese system by their incorrigible misery and poverty, as an old coachman is proverbially said to maintain for the crack of the whip. All his judicial sympathies were not fully awakened on the present occasion, however, the criminals, though far from belonging to the more lucky of their fellow creatures, not being quite miserable enough in appearance to awaken all these powers of magisterial reproach and severity that lay dormant in the bailiff's moral temperament, ready at any time to vindicate the right of the strong against the innovations of the feeble and unhappy. The reader will at once have anticipated that the prisoners were Maso and his companions, who had been more successful in escaping from their keepers, than fortunate in evading the attempts to secure their persons a second time.

"Who are these that dare affront the ruling powers on

this day of general good-will and rejoicing?" sternly commanded the bailiff, when the minions of the law and their captives stood fairly before him. "Do ye not know, knaves, that this is a solemn, almost a religious ceremony at Vévey—for so it would be considered by the ancients at least—and that a crime is doubly a crime when committed either in an honorable presence, on a solemn and dignified occasion like this, or against the authorities;—this last being always the gravest and greatest of all?"

"We are but indifferent scholars, worshipful bailiff, as you may easily perceive by our outward appearance, and are to be judged leniently," answered Maso. "Our whole offence was a hot but short quarrel touching a dog, in which hands were made to play the part of reason, and which would have done little harm to any but ourselves, had it been the pleasure of the town authorities to have left us to decide the dispute in our own way. As you well say, this is a joyous occasion, and we esteem it hard that we, of all Vévey, should be shut up on account of so light an affair and cut off from the merriment of the rest."

"There is reason in this fellow, after all," said Peterchen, in a low voice. "What is a dog more or less to Berne, and a public rejoicing to produce its end should go deep into the community. Let the men go, of God's name! and look to it, that all the dogs be beaten out of the square, that we may have no more folly."

"Please you, these are the men that have escaped from the authorities, after knocking down their keeper," the officer humbly observed.

"How is this! Didst thou not say, fellow, that it was all about a dog?"

"I spoke of the reason of our being shut up. It is true that, wearied with breathing pent air, and a little heated with wine, we left the prison without permission; but we hope this little sally of spirit will be overlooked on account of the extraordinary occasion."

"Rogue, thy plea augments the offence. A crime committed on an extraordinary occasion becomes an extraordinary crime, and requires an extraordinary punishment, which I intend to see inflicted forthwith. You have insulted the authorities, and that is the unpardonable sin in all communities. Draw nearer, friends, for I love to let my reasons be felt and understood by those who are to be affected by my decisions, and this is a happy moment to

give a short lesson to the Vévaisans—let the bride and bridegroom wait—draw nearer all, that ye may better hear what I have to say.”

The crowd pressed more closely around the foot of the stage, and Peterchen, assuming a didactic air, resumed his discourse.

“The object of all authority is to find the means of its own support,” continued the bailiff; “for unless it can exist, it must fall to the ground; and you all are sufficiently schooled to know that when a thing becomes of indifferent value, it loses most of its consideration. Thus government is established in order that it may protect itself; since without this power it could not remain a government, and there is not a man existing who is not ready to admit that even a bad government is better than none. But ours is particularly a good government, its greatest care on all occasions being to make itself respected, and he who respects himself is certain to have esteem in the eyes of others. Without this security we should become like the unbridled steed, or the victims of anarchy and confusion, aye, and damnable heresies in religion. Thus you see, my friends, your choice lies between the government of Berne, or no government at all; for when only two things exist, by taking one away the number is reduced half, and as the great canton will keep its own share of the institutions, by taking half away, Vaud is left as naked as my hand. Ask yourselves if you have any government but this? You know you have not. Were you quit of Berne, therefore, you clearly would have none at all. Officer, you have a sword at your side, which is a good type of our authority; draw it and hold it up, that all may see it. You perceive, my friends, that the officer hath a sword; but that he hath only one sword. Lay it at thy feet, officer. You perceive, friends, that having but one sword, and laying that sword aside, he no longer hath a sword at all! That weapon represents our authority, which laid aside becomes no authority, leaving us with an unarmed hand.”

This happy comparison drew a murmur of applause: the proposition of Peterchen having most of the properties of a popular theory, being deficient in neither a bold assertion, a brief exposition, nor a practical illustration. The latter in particular was long afterward spoken of in Vaud, as an exposition little short of the well-known judgment of Solomon, who had resorted to the same keen-

edged weapon in order to solve a point almost as knotty as this settled by the bailiff. When the approbation had a little subsided, the warmed Peterchen continued his discourse, which possessed the random and generalized logic of most of the dissertations that are uttered in the interests of things as they are, without paying any particular deference to things as they should be.

"What is the use of teaching the multitude to read and write?" he asked. "Had not Franz Kauffman known how to write, could he have imitated his master's hand, and would he have lost his head for mistaking another man's name for his own? a little reflection shows us he would not. Now, as for the other art, could the people read bad books had they never learned the alphabet? If there is a man present who can say to the contrary, I absolve him from his respect, and invite him to speak boldly, for there is no Inquisition in Vaud, but we invite argument. This is a free government, and a fatherly government, and a mild government, as ye all know; but this is not a government that likes reading and writing; reading that leads to the perusal of bad books, and writing that causes false signatures. Fellow citizens, for we are all equal with the exception of certain differences that need not now be named, it is a government for your good, and therefore it is a government that likes itself, and whose first duty it is to protect itself and its officers at all hazards, even though it might by accident commit some seeming injustice. Fellow, canst thou read?"

"Indifferently, worshipful bailiff," returned Maso. "There are those who get through a book with less trouble than myself."

"I warrant you, now, he means a good book, but, as for a bad one, I'll engage the varlet goes through it like a wild boar! This comes of education among the ignorant! There is no more certain method to corrupt a community, and to rivet it in beastly practices, than to educate the ignorant. The enlightened can bear knowledge, for rich food does not harm the stomach that is used to it, but it is hellebore to the ill fed. Education is an arm, for knowledge is power, and the ignorant man is but an infant, and to give him knowledge is like putting a loaded blunderbuss into the hands of a child. What can an ignorant man do with knowledge? He is as likely to use it wrong end uppermost as in any other manner. Learning

is a ticklish thing ; it was said by Festus to have maddened even the wise and experienced Paul, and what may we not expect it to do with your downright ignoramus ? What is thy name, prisoner ?”

“Tommaso Santi ; sometimes known among my friends as San Tommaso ; called by my enemies, Il Maledetto, and by my familiars, Maso.”

“Thou hast a formidable number of aliases, the certain sign of a rogue. Thou hast confessed that thou canst read——”

“Nay, Signor Bailiff, I would not be taken to have said——”

“By the faith of Calvin, thou didst confess it, before all this goodly company ! Wilt thou deny thine own words, knave, in the very face of justice ? Thou canst read—thou hast it in thy countenance, and I would go nigh to swear, too, that thou hast some inkling of the quill, were the truth honestly said. Signor Grimaldi, I know not how you find this affair on the other side of the Alps, but with us, our greatest troubles come from these well-taught knaves, who, picking up knowledge fraudulently, use it with felonious intent, without thought of the wants and rights of the public.”

“We have our difficulties, as is the fact wherever man is found with his selfishness and passions, Signor Bailiff ; but are we not doing an ungallant act toward yonder fair bride, by giving the precedency to men of this cast ? Would it not be better to dismiss the modest Christine, happy in Hymen’s chains, before we enter more deeply into the question of the manacles of these prisoners ?”

To the amazement of all who knew the bailiff’s natural obstinacy, which was wont to increase instead of becoming more manageable in his cups, Peterchen assented to this proposition with a complaisance and apparent good will, that he rarely manifested toward any opinion of which he did not think himself legitimately the father ; though, like many others who bear that honorable title, he was sometimes made to yield the privileges of paternity to other men’s children. He had shown an unusual deference to the Italian, however, throughout the whole of their short intercourse, and on no occasion was it less equivocal, than in the promptness with which he received the present hint. The prisoners and officers were commanded to stand aside, but so near as to remain beneath his eye, while some

of the officials of the abbaye were ordered to give notice to the train, which awaited these arrangements in silent wonder, that it might now approach.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“Go, wiser thou! and in thy scale of sense
Weigh thy opinion against Providence;
Call imperfection what thou fanciest such;
Say, here he gives too little, there too much;
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
And say, if man’s unhappy, God’s unjust.”—POPE.

It is unnecessary to repeat the list of characters that acted the different parts in the train of the village nuptials. All were there at the close of the ceremonies, as they had appeared earlier in the day, and as the last of the legal forms of the marriage was actually to take place in the presence of the bailiff, preparatory to the more solemn rites of the Church, the throng yielded to its curiosity, breaking through the line of those who were stationed to restrain its inroads, and pressing about the foot of the estrade in the stronger interest which reality is known to possess over fiction. During the day a thousand new inquiries had been made concerning the bride, whose beauty and mien were altogether so superior to what might have been expected of one who could consent to act the part she did on so public an occasion, and whose modest bearing was in such singular contradiction to her present situation. None knew, however, or, if it were known, no one chose to reveal, her history; and, as curiosity had been so keenly whetted by mystery, the rush of the multitude was merely a proof of the power which expectation, aided by the thousand surmises of rumor, can gain over the minds of the idle.

Whatever might have been the character of the conjectures made at the expense of poor Christine—and they were wanting in neither variety nor malice—most were compelled to agree in commending the diffidence of her air, and the gentle sweetness of her mild and peculiar beauty. Some, indeed, affected to see artifice in the former, which was pronounced to be far too excellent, or too

much overdone, for nature. The usual amount of commonplace remarks was made, too, on the lucky diversity that was to be found in tastes, and on the happy necessity there existed of all being able to find the means to please themselves. But these were no more than the moral blotches that usually disfigure human commendation. The sentiment and sympathies of the mass were powerfully and irresistibly enlisted in favor of the unknown maiden—feelings that were very unequivocally manifested as she drew nearer the estrade, walking timidly through a dense lane of bodies, all of which were pressing eagerly forward to get a better view of her person.

The bailiff, under ordinary circumstances, would have taken in dudgeon this violation of the rules prescribed for the government of the multitude; for he was perfectly sincere in his opinions, absurd as so many of them were, and, like many other honest men who defeat the effects they would produce by forced constructions of their principles, he was a little apt to run into excesses of discipline. But in the present instance, he was rather pleased than otherwise to see the throng within the reach of his voice. The occasion was, at best, but semi-official, and he was so far under the influence of the warm liquors of the côtes as to burn with the desire of putting forth still more liberally his flowers of eloquence and his stores of wisdom. He received the inroad, therefore, with an air of perfect good humor, a manifestation of assent that encouraged still greater innovations on the limits, until the space occupied by the principal actors in this closing scene was reduced to the smallest possible size that was at all compatible with their movements and comforts. In this situation of things the ceremonies proceeded.

The gentle flow of hope and happiness which was slowly increasing in the mild bosom of the bride, from the first moment of her appearance in this unusual scene to that in which it was checked by the cries of Pippo, had been gradually lessening under a sense of distrust, and she now entered the square with a secret and mysterious dread at the heart, which her inexperience and great ignorance of life served fearfully to increase. Her imagination magnified the causes of alarm into some prepared and designed insult. Christine, fully aware of the obloquy that pressed upon her race, had only consented to adopt this unusual mode of changing her condition, under

a sensitive apprehension that any other would have necessarily led to the exposure of her origin. This fear, though exaggerated, and indeed causeless, was the result of too much brooding of late over her own situation, and of that morbid sensibility in which the most pure and innocent are, unhappily, the most likely to indulge. The concealment, as has already been explained, was that of her intended husband, who, with the subterfuge of an interested spirit, had hoped to mislead the little circle of his own acquaintances and gratify his cupidity at the cheapest possible rate to himself. But there is a point of self-abasement beyond which the perfect consciousness of right rarely permits even the most timid to proceed. As the bride moved up the lane of human bodies, her eye grew less disturbed and her step firmer,—for the bride of rectitude overcame the ordinary girlish sensibilities of her sex, and made her the steadiest at the very instant that the greater portion of females would have been the most likely to betray their weakness. She had just attained this forced but respectable tranquillity, as the bailiff, signing to the crowd to hush its murmurs and to remain motionless, arose, with a manner that he intended to be dignified, and which passed with the multitude for a very successful experiment in its way, to open the business in hand by a short address. The reader is not to be surprised at the volubility of honest Peterchen, for it was getting to be late in the day, and his frequent libations throughout the ceremonies would have wrought him up to even a much higher flight of eloquence, had the occasion and the company at all suited such a display of his powers.

“We have had a joyous day, my friends,” he said; “one whose excellent ceremonies ought to recall to every one of us our dependence on Providence, our frail and sinful dispositions, and particularly our duties to the councils. By the types of plenty and abundance, we see the bounty of nature which is a gift from Heaven: by the different little failures that have been, perhaps, unavoidably made in some of the nicer parts of the exhibition—and I would here particularly mention the besotted drunkenness of Antoine Giraud, the man who has impudently undertaken to play the part of Silenus, as a fit subject of your attention, for it is full of profit to all hard-drinking knaves—we may see our own awful imperfections; while, in the

order of the whole, and the perfect obedience of the subordinates, do we find a parallel to the beauty of a vigilant and exact police and a well-regulated community. Thus you see, that though the ceremony hath a Heathen exterior, it hath a Christian moral; God grant that we all forget the former, and remember the latter, as best becomes our several characters and our common country. And now, having done with the divinities and their legends—with the exception of that varlet Silenus, whose misconduct, I promise you, is not to be so easily overlooked—we will give some attention to mortal affairs. Marriage is honorable before God and man, and although I have never had leisure to enter into this holy state myself, owing to a variety of reasons, but chiefly from my being wedded, as it were, to the State, to which we all owe quite as much, or even greater duty, than the most faithful wife owes to her husband, I would not have you suppose that I have not a high veneration for matrimony. So far from this, I have looked on no part of this day's ceremonies with more satisfaction than these of the nuptials, which we are now called upon to complete in a manner suitable to the importance of the occasion. Let the bridegroom and the bride stand forth, that all may the better see the happy pair."

At the bidding of the bailiff, Jacques Colis led Christine upon the little stage prepared for their reception, where both were more completely in view of the spectators than they had yet been. The movement, and the agitation consequent on so public an exposure, deepened the bloom on the soft cheeks of the bride, and another and a still less equivocal murmur of applause arose in the multitude. The spectacle of youth, innocence, and feminine loveliness, strongly stirred the sympathies of even the most churlish and rude; and most present began to feel for her fears, and to participate in her hopes.

"This is excellent!" continued the well-pleased Peterchen, who was never half so happy as when he was officially providing for the happiness of others; "it promises a happy *menage*. A loyal, frugal, industrious, and active groom, with a fair and willing bride, can drive discontent up any man's chimney. That which is to be done next, being legal and binding, must be done with proper gravity and respect. Let the notary advance—not him who hath so aptly played this character, but the commend-

able and upright officer who is rightly charged with these respectable functions—and we will listen to the contract. I recommend a decent silence, my friends, for the true laws and real matrimony are at the bottom—a grave affair at the best, and one never to be treated with levity ; since a few words pronounced now in haste may be repented of for a whole life hereafter.”

Everything was conducted according to the wishes of the bailiff, and with great decency of form. A true and authorized notary read aloud the marriage-contract, the instrument which contained the civic relations and rights of the parties, and which only waited for the signatures to be complete. This document required, of course, that the real names of the contracting parties, their ages, births, parentage, and all those facts which are necessary to establish their identity, and to secure the rights of succession, should be clearly set forth in a way to render the instrument valid at the most remote period, should there ever arrive a necessity to recur to it in the way of testimony. The most eager attention pervaded the crowd as they listened to these little particulars, and Adelheid trembled in this delicate part of the proceedings, as the suppressed but still audible breathing of Sigismund reached her ear, lest something might occur to give a rude shock to his feelings. But it would seem the notary had his cue. The details touching Christine were so artfully arranged, that while they were perfectly binding in law, they were so dexterously concealed from the observation of the unsuspecting, that no attention was drawn to the point most apprehended by their exposure. Sigismund breathed freer when the notary drew near the end of his task, and Adelheid heard the heavy breath he drew at the close, with the joy one feels at the certainty of having passed an imminent danger. Christine herself seemed relieved, though her inexperience in a great degree prevented her from foreseeing all that the greater practice of Sigismund had led him to anticipate.

“This is quite in rule, and naught now remains but to receive the signatures of the respective parties and their friends,” resumed the bailiff. “A happy *ménage* is like a well-ordered state, a foretaste of the joys and peace of heaven ; while a discontented household and a turbulent community may be likened at once to the penalties and the pains of hell ! Let the friends of the parties step

forth, in readiness to sign when the principals themselves shall have discharged this duty."

A few of the relatives and associates of Jacques Colis moved out of the crowd and placed themselves at the side of the bridegroom, who immediately wrote his own name, like a man impatient to be happy. A pause succeeded, for all were curious to see who claimed affinity to the trembling girl, on this the most solemn and important event of her life. An interval of several minutes elapsed, and no one appeared. The respiration of Sigismund became more difficult; he seemed about to choke, and then yielding to a generous impulse, he arose.

"For the love of God!—for thine own sake!—for mine! be not too hasty!" whispered the terrified Adelheid; for she saw the hot glow that almost blazed on his brow.

"I cannot desert poor Christine to the scorn of the world, in a moment like this! If I die of shame, I must go forward and own myself!"

The hand of Mademoiselle de Willading was laid upon his arm, and he yielded to this silent but impressive entreaty, for just then he saw that his sister was about to be relieved from her distressing solitude. The throng yielded, and a decent pair, attired in the guise of small but comfortable proprietors, moved doubtfully toward the bride. The eyes of Christine filled with tears, for terror and the apprehension of disgrace yielded suddenly to joy. Those who advanced to support her in that moment of intense trial were her father and mother. The respectable-looking pair moved slowly to the side of their daughter, and having placed themselves one on each side of her, they first ventured to cast furtive and subdued glances at the multitude.

"It is doubtless painful to the parents to part with so fair and so dutiful a child," resumed the obtuse Peterchen, who rarely saw in any emotion more than its most commonplace and vulgar character. "Nature pulls them one way, while the terms of the contract and the progress of our ceremonies pull another. I have often weaknesses of this sort myself, the most sensitive hearts being the most liable to these attacks. But my children are the public, and do not admit of too much of what I may call the detail of sentiment, else, by the soul of Calvin! were I but an indifferent bailiff for Berne! Thou art the father of this fair and blushing maiden, and thou her mother?"

"We are these," returned Balthazar, mildly.

"Thou art not of Vévey, or its neighborhood, by thy speech?"

"Of the great canton, mein Herr," for the answer was in German, these contracted districts possessing nearly as many dialects as there are territorial divisions. "We are strangers in Vaud."

"Thou hast not done the worse for marrying thy daughter with a Vévaisan, and more especially, under the favor of our renowned and liberal abbaye. I warrant me thy child will be none the poorer for this compliance with the wishes of those who lead our ceremonies!"

"She will not go portionless to the house of her husband," returned the father, coloring with secret pride; for to one to whom the chances of life left so few sources of satisfaction, those that were possessed became doubly dear.

"This is well! A right worthy couple! And, I doubt not, a meet companion will your offspring prove. Monsieur le Notair, call off the names of these good people aloud, that they may sign, at least, with a decent parade."

"It is settled otherwise," hastily answered the functionary of the quill, who was necessarily in the secret of Christine's origin, and who had been well bribed to observe discretion. "It would altogether derange the order and regularity of the proceedings."

"As thou wilt; for I would have nothing illegal, and least of all, nothing disorderly. But o' Heaven's sake! let us get through with our penmanship, for I hear there are symptoms that the meats are likely to be overbaked. Canst thou write, good man?"

"Indifferently, mein Herr; but in a way to make what I will binding before the law."

"Give the quill to the bride, Mr. Notary, and let us protract the happy event no longer."

The bailiff here bent his head aside and whispered to an attendant to hurry toward the kitchens and to look to the affairs of the banquet. Christine took the pen with a trembling hand and pallid cheek, and was about to apply it to the paper, when a sudden cry from the throng diverted the attention of all present to a new matter of interest.

"Who dares thus indecently interrupt this grave scene, and that, too, in so great a presence?" sternly demanded the bailiff.

Pippo, who with the other prisoners, had unavoidably been inclosed in the space near the estrade by the pressure of the multitude, staggered more into view, and moving his cap with a well-managed respect, presented himself humbly to the sight of Peterchen.

"It is I, illustrious and excellent governor," returned the wily Neapolitan, who retained just enough of the liquor he had swallowed to render him audacious, without weakening his means of observation. "It is I, Pippo; an artist of humble pretensions, but I hope, a very honest man, and as I know, a great reverencer of the laws and a true friend to order."

"Let the good man speak up boldly. A man of these principles has a right to be heard. We live in a time of damnable innovations, and of most atrocious attempts to overturn the altar, the State, and the public trusts, and the sentiments of such a man are like dew to the parched grass."

The reader is not to imagine, from the language of the bailiff, that Vaud stood on the eve of any great political commotion, but as the government was in itself an usurpation, and founded on the false principle of exclusion, it was quite as usual then as now, to cry out against the moral throes of violated right, since the same eagerness to possess, the same selfishness in grasping, however unjustly obtained, and the same audacity of assertion with a view to mystify, pervaded the Christian world a century since as exist to-day. The cunning Pippo saw that the bait had taken, and assuming a still more respectful and loyal mien, he continued:—

"Although a stranger, illustrious governor, I have had great delight in these joyous and excellent ceremonies. Their fame will be spread far and near, and men will talk of little else for the coming year but of Vévey and its festival. But a great scandal hangs over your honorable heads which it is in my power to turn aside, and San Genaro forbid that I, a stranger, that hath been well entertained in your town, should hesitate about raising his voice on account of any scruples of modesty! No doubt, great governor, your Eccellenza believes that this worthy Vévaisan is about to wive a creditable maiden, whose name could be honorably metioned with those of the ceremonies and your town, before the proudest company in Europe?"

"What of this, fellow? The girl is fair, and modest

enough, at least to the eye, and if thou knowest aught else, whisper thy secret to her husband or her friends, but do not come in this rude manner to disturb our harmony with thy raven throat, just as we are ready to sing an epithalamium in honor of the happy pair. Your excessive particularity is the curse of wedlock, my friends, and I have a great mind to send this knave, in spite of all his profession of order, which is like enough to produce disorder, for a month or two into our Vévey dungeon for his pains."

Pippo was staggered, for, just drunk enough to be audacious, he had not all his faculties at his perfect command, and his usual acumen was a little at fault. Still, accustomed to brave public opinion, and to carry himself through the failures of his exhibitions of heavier drafts on the patience and credulity of his audience, he determined to persevere as the most likely way of extricating himself from the menaced consequences of his indiscretion.

"A thousand pardons, great bailiff," he answered. "Naught but a burning desire to do justice to your high honor, and to the reputation of the abbaye's festival, could have led me so far, but——"

"Speak thy mind at once, rogue, and have done with circumlocution."

"I have little to say, signore, except that the father of this illustrious bride, who is about to honor Vévey by making her nuptials an occasion for all in the city to witness and to favor, is the common headsman of Berne—a wretch who lately came near to prove the destruction of more Christians than the law has condemned, and who is sufficiently out of favor with Heaven to bring the fate of Gomorrah upon your town!"

Pippo tottered to his station among the prisoners, with the manner of one who had delivered himself of an important trust, and was instantly lost to view. So rapid and unlooked-for had been the interruption, and so vehement the utterance of the Italian while delivering his facts, that, though several present saw their tendency when it was too late, none had sufficient presence of mind to prevent the exposure. A murmur arose in the crowd, which stirred like a vast sheet of fluid on which a passing gust had alighted, and then became fixed and calm. Of all present, the bailiff manifested the least surprise or concern, for to him the last minister of the law was an object, if not pre-

cisely of respect, of politic good-will rather than of dishonor.

"What of this!" he answered, in the way of one who had expected a far more important revelation. "What of this, should it be true? Harkee, friend—art thou, in sooth, the noted Balthazar, he to whose family the canton is indebted for so much fair justice?"

Balthazar saw that his secret was betrayed, and that it were wiser simply to admit the facts, than to have recourse to subterfuge or denial. Nature, moreover, had made him a man with strong and pure propensities for the truth, and he was never without the innate consciousness of the injustice of which he had been made the victim by the unfeeling ordinance of society. Raising his head, he looked around him with firmness, for he too, unhappily, had been accustomed to act in the face of multitudes, and he answered the question of the bailiff, in his usual mild tone of voice, but with composure.

"Herr Bailiff, I am by inheritance the last avenger of the law."

"By my office! I like the title; it is a good one! The last avenger of the law! If rogues will offend, or dissatisfied spirits plot, there must be a hand to put the finishing blow to their evil works, and why not thou as well as another! Harkee, officers, shut me up yonder Italian knave for a week on bread and water, for daring to trifle with the time and good nature of the public in this impudent manner. And this worthy dame is thy wife, honest Balthazar; and that fair maiden thy child? Hast thou more of so goodly a race?"

"God has blessed me in my offspring, mein Herr."

"Aye; God hath blessed thee!—and a great blessing it should be, as I know by bitter experience—that is, being a bachelor, I understand the misery of being childless—I would say no more. Sign the contract, honest Balthazar, with thy wife and daughter, that we may have an end of this."

The family of the proscribed were about to obey this mandate, when Jacques Colis abruptly threw down the emblems of a bridegroom, tore the contract in fragments, and publicly announced that he had changed his intention, and that he would not wive a headsman's child. The public mind is usually caught by any loud declaration in favor of the ruling prejudice, and after the first brief pause of

surprise was past, the determination of the groom was received with a shout of applause that was immediately followed by general, coarse, and deriding laughter. The throng pressed upon the keepers of the limits in a still denser mass, opposing an impenetrable wall of human bodies to the passage of any in either direction, and a dead stillness succeeded, as if all present breathlessly awaited the result of the singular scene.

So unexpected and sudden was the purpose of the groom, that they who were most affected by it, did not, at first, fully comprehend the extent of the disgrace that was so publicly heaped upon them. The innocent and unpractised Christine stood resembling the cold statue of a vestal, with the pen raised ready to affix her as yet untarnished name to the contract, in an attitude of suspense, while her wondering look followed the agitation of the multitude, as the startled bird, before it takes wing, regards a movement among the leaves of the bush. But there was no escape from the truth. Conviction of its humiliating nature came too soon, and by the time the calm of intense curiosity had succeeded to the momentary excitement of the spectators, she was standing an exquisite, but painful, picture of wounded feminine feeling and of maiden shame. Her parents, too, were stupified by the suddenness of the unexpected shock, and it was longer before their faculties recovered the tone proper to meet an insult so unprovoked and gross.

"This is unusual," dryly remarked the bailiff, who was the first to break the long and painful silence.

"It is brutal!" warmly interposed the Signore Grimaldi.

"Unless there has been deception practised on the bridegroom, it is utterly without excuse."

"Your experience, signore, has readily suggested the true points in a very knotty case, and I shall proceed without delay to look into its merits."

Sigismund resumed his seat, his hand releasing the sword-hilt that it had spontaneously grasped when he heard this declaration of the bailiff's intentions.

"For the sake of thy poor sister, forbear!" whispered the terrified Adelheid. "All will yet be well—all must be well—it is impossible that one so sweet and innocent should long remain with her honor unavenged!"

The young man smiled frightfully, at least so it seemed to his companion: but he maintained the appearance of

composure. In the meantime Peterchen, having secretly dispatched another messenger to the cooks, turned his serious attention to the difficulty that had just arisen.

"I have long been intrusted by the council with honorable duties," he said, "but never, before to-day, have I been required to decide upon a domestic misunderstanding, before the parties were actually wedded. This is a grave interruption of the ceremonies of the abbaye, as well as a slight upon the notary and the spectators, and needs be well looked to. Dost thou really persist in putting this unusual termination to the marriage ceremony, Herr Bridegroom?"

Jacques Colis had lost a little of the violent impulse which led him to the precipitate and inconsiderate act of destroying an instrument he had legally executed; but this outbreaking of feeling was followed by a sullen and fixed resolution to persevere in the refusal at every hazard to himself.

"I will not wive the daughter of a man hunted of society, and avoided by all," he doggedly answered.

"No doubt the respectability of the parent is the next thing to a good dowry, in the choice of a wife," returned the bailiff, "but one of thy years has not come hither, without having first inquired into the parentage of her thou wert about to wed?"

"It was sworn to me that the secret should be kept. The girl is well endowed, and a promise was solemnly made that her parentage should never be known. The family of Colis is esteemed in Vaud, and I would not have it said that the blood of the headsman of the canton hath mixed in a stream as fair as ours."

"And yet thou wert not unwilling, so long as the circumstance was unknown? Thy objection is less to the fact, than to its public exposure."

"Without the aid of parchments and tongues, Monsieur le Bailli, we should all be equal in birth. Ask the noble Baron de Willading, who is seated there at your side, why he is better than another. He will tell you that he is come of an ancient and honorable line; but had he been taken from his castle in infancy, and concealed under a feigned name, and kept from men's knowledge as being that he is, who would think of him for the deeds of his ancestors? As the Sire de Willading would, in such a case, have lost in the world's esteem, so did Christine gain; but as opinion

would return to the Baron, when the truth should be published, so does it desert Balthazar's daughter, when she is known to be a headsman's child. I would have married the maiden as she was, but, your pardon, Monsieur le Bailli, if I say, I will not wive her as she is."

A murmur of approbation followed this plausible and ready apology, for, when antipathies are active and bitter, men are easily satisfied with a doubtful morality and a weak argument.

"This honest youth hath some reason in him," observed the puzzled bailiff, shaking his head. "I would he had been less expert in disputation, or that the secret had been better kept! It is apparent as the sun in the heavens, friend Melchior, that hadst thou not been known as thy father's child, thou wouldst not have succeeded to thy castle and lands—nay, by St. Luke! not even to the rights of the *bürgerschaft*."

"In Genoa we are used to hear both parties," gravely rejoined the Signor Grimaldi, "that we may first make sure that we touch the true merits of the case. Were another to claim the Signor de Willading's honors and name, thou wouldst scarce grant his suit, without questioning our friend here, touching his own rights to the same."

"Better and better! This is justice, while that which fell from the bridegroom was only argument. Harkee, Balthazar, and thou good woman, his wife—and thou too, pretty Christine—what have ye all to answer to the reasonable plea of Jacques Colis?"

Balthazar, who, by the nature of his office, and by his general masculine duties, had been so much accustomed to meet with harsh instances of the public hatred, soon recovered his usual calm exterior, even though he felt a father's pang and a father's just resentment at witnessing this open injury to one so gentle and deserving as his child. But the blow had been far heavier on Marguerite, the faithful and long-continued sharer of his fortunes. The wife of Balthazar was past the prime of her days, but she still retained the presence, and some of the personal beauty, which had rendered her, in youth, a woman of extraordinary mien and carriage. When the words which announced the slight to her daughter first fell on her ears, she paled to the hue of the dead. For several minutes she stood looking more like one that had taken a final departure from the interests and emotions of life, than one that, in truth,

was a prey to one of the strongest passions the human breast can ever entertain, that of wounded maternal affection. Then the blood stole slowly to her temples, and, by the time the bailiff put his question, her entire face was glowing under a tumult of feeling that threatened to defeat its own wishes, by depriving her of the power of speech.

"Thou canst answer him, Balthazar," she said huskily, motioning for her husband to arouse his faculties; "thou art used to these multitudes and to their scorn. Thou art a man, and canst do us justice."

"Herr Bailiff," said the headsman, who seldom lost the mild deportment that characterized his manner, "there is much truth in what Jacques hath urged, but all present may have seen that the fault did not come of us, but of yonder heartless vagabond. The wretch sought my life on the lake, in our late unfortunate passage hither; and, not content with wishing to rob my children of their father, he comes now to injure me still more cruelly. I was born to the office I hold, as you well know, Herr Hofmeister, or it would never have been sought by me; but what the law wills, men insist upon as right. This girl can never be called upon to strike a head from its shoulders, and, knowing from childhood up the scorn that awaits all who come of my race, I sought the means of releasing her, at least, from some part of the curse that hath descended on us."

"I know not if this were legal!" interrupted the bailiff, quickly. "What is your opinion, Herr von Willading? Can any in Berne escape their heritable duties, any more than hereditary privileges can be assumed? This is a grave question; innovation leads to innovation, and our venerable laws and our sacred usages must be preserved, if we would avert the curse of change!"

"Balthazar hath well observed that a female cannot exercise the executioner's office."

"True, but a female may bring forth them that can. This is a cunning question for the doctors-in-law, and it must be examined; of all damnable offences, Heaven keep me from that of a wish for change. If change is ever to follow, why establish? Change is the unpardonable sin in politics, Signor Grimaldi; since that which is often changed becomes valueless in time, even if it be coin."

"The mother hath something she would utter," said the

Genoese, whose quick, but observant eye had been watching the workings of the countenances of the repudiated family, while the bailiff was digressing in his usual prolix manner on things in general, and who detected the throes of feeling which heaved the bosom of the respectable Marguerite, in a way to announce a speedy birth to her thoughts.

"Hast thou aught to urge, good woman?" demanded Peterchen, who was well enough disposed to hear both sides in all cases of controversy, unless they happened to touch the supremacy of the great canton. "To speak the truth, the reasons of Jacques Colis are plausible and witty, and are likely to weigh heavy against thee."

The color slowly disappeared from the brow of the mother, and she turned such a look of fondness and protection on her child, as spoke a complete condensation of all her feelings in the engrossing sentiment of a mother's love.

"Have I aught to urge!" slowly repeated Marguerite, looking steadily about her at the curious and unfeeling crowd, which, bent on the indulgence of its appetite for novelty, and excited by its prejudices, still pressed upon the halberds of the officers—"Has a mother aught to say in defence of her injured and insulted child! What hast thou not also asked, Herr Hofmeister, if I am human? We come of proscribed races, I know, Balthazar and I, but like thee, proud bailiff, and the privileged at thy side, we come too of God! The judgment and power of men have crushed us from the beginning, and we are used to the world's scorn and to the world's injustice!"

"Say not so, good woman, for no more is required than the law sanctions. Thou art now talking against thine own interests, and I interrupt thee in pure mercy. 'Twould be scandalous in me to sit here and listen to one that hath bespattered the law with an evil tongue."

"I know aught of the subtleties of thy laws, but well do I know their cruelty and wrongs, as respects me and mine! All others come into the world with hope, but we have been crushed from the beginning. That surely cannot be just which destroys hope. Even the sinner need not despair, through the mercy of the Son of God! but we, that have come into the world under thy laws, have little before us in life but shame and the scorn of men!"

"Nay, thou quite mistakest the matter, dame; these

privileges were first bestowed on thy families in reward for good services, I make no doubt, and it was long accounted profitable to be of this office."

"I do not say that in a darker age, when oppression stalked over the land, and the best were barbarous as the worst to-day, some of those of whom we are born may not have been fierce and cruel enough to take upon themselves this office with good will; but I deny that any short of Him who holds the universe in his hand, and who controls an endless future to compensate for the evils of the present time, has the power to say to the son, that he shall be the heritor of the father's wrongs!"

"How! dost question the doctrine of descents? We shall next hear thee dispute the rights of the bürgerchaft!"

"I know nothing, Herr Bailiff, of the nice distinctions of your rights in the city, and wish to utter naught for or against. But an entire life of contumely and bitterness is apt to become a life of thoughtfulness and care; and I see sufficient difference between the preservation of privileges fairly earned, though even these may and do bring with them abuses hard to be borne, and the unmerited oppression of the offspring for the ancestor's faults. There is little of that justice which savors of Heaven in this, and the time will come when a fearful return will be made for wrongs so sore!"

"Concern for thy pretty daughter, good Marguerite, causes thee to speak strongly."

"Is not the daughter of a headsman and a headsman's wife their offspring, as much as the fair maiden who sits near thee is the child of the noble at her side? Am I to love her less, that she is despised by a cruel world? Had I not the same suffering at the birth, the same joy in the infant smile, the same hope in the childish promise, and the same trembling for her fate when I consented to trust her happiness to another, as she that bore that more fortunate but not fairer maiden hath had in her? Hath God created two natures—two yearnings for the mother—two longings for our children's weal—those of the rich and honored, and those of the crushed and despised?"

"Go to, good Marguerite; thou puttest the matter altogether in a manner that is unusual. Are our revered usages nothing—our solemn edicts—our city's rule—and our resolution to govern, and that fairly and with effect?"

"I fear that these are stronger than the right, and likely

to endure when the tears of the oppressed are exhausted, when they and their fates shall be forgotten !”

“Thy child is fair and modest,” observed the Signor Grimaldi, “and will yet find a youth who will more than atone for this injury. He that has rejected her was not worthy of her faith.”

Marguerite turned her look, which had been glowing with awakened feeling, on her pale and still motionless daughter. The expression of her eyes softened, and she folded her child to her bosom, as the dove shelters its young. All her aroused feelings appeared to dissolve in the sentiment of love.

“My child is fair, Herr Peter,” she continued, without adverting to the interruption ; “but better than fair, she is good ! Christine is gentle and dutiful, and not for a world would she bruise the spirit of another as hers has been this day bruised. Humbled as we are, and despised of men, bailiff, we have our thoughts, and our wishes, and our hopes, and memory, and all the other feelings of those that are more fortunate ; and when I have racked my brain to reason on the justice of a fate which has condemned all of my race to have little other communion with their kind but that of blood, and when bitterness has swollen at my heart, aye, near to bursting, and I have been ready to curse Providence and die, this mild, affectionate girl hath been near to quench the fire that consumed me, and to tighten the cords of life until the love and innocence have left me willing to live even under a heavier load than this I bear. Thou art of an honored race, bailiff, and canst little understand most of our suffering ; but thou art a man, and shouldst know what it is to be wounded through another, and that one who is dearer to thee than thine own flesh.”

“Thy words are strong, good Marguerite,” again interrupted the bailiff, who felt an uneasiness of which he would very gladly be rid. “Himmel ! Who can like anything better than his own flesh ? Besides, thou shouldst remember that I am a bachelor, and bachelors are apt naturally, to feel more for their own flesh than for that of others. Stand aside and let the procession pass, that we may go to the banquet, which waits. If Jacques Colis will none of thy girl, I have not the power to make him. Double the dowry, good woman, and thou shalt have a choice of husbands, in spite of the axe and the sword that are in thy escutcheon. Let the halberdiers make way for those hon-

st people there, who, at least, are functionaries of the law, and are to be protected as well as ourselves."

The crowd obeyed, yielding readily to the advance of the officers, and, in a few minutes, the useless attendants of the village nuptials, and the train of Hymen, slunk away, sensible of the ridicule that, in a double degree, attaches itself to folly, when it fails of affecting even its own absurdities.

CHAPTER XIX.

"The weeping blood in woman's breast
Was never known to thee ;
Nor the balm that drops on wounds of woe
From woman's pitying e'e."—BURNS.

A LARGE portion of the curious followed the disconcerted mummers from the square, while others hastened to break their fasts at the several places selected for this important feature in the business of the day. Most of those who had been on the estrade now left it, and, in a few minutes, the living carpet of heads around the little area in front of the bailiff was reduced to a few hundreds of those whose better feelings were stronger than their self-indulgence. Perhaps this distribution of the multitude is about in the proportion that is usually found in those cases in which selfishness draws in one direction, while feeling or sympathy with the wronged pulls in another, among all masses of human beings that are congregated as spectators of some general and indifferent exhibition of interests in which they have no near personal concern.

The bailiff and his immediate friends, the prisoners, and the family of the headsman, with a sufficient number of the guards, were among those who remained. The bustling Peterchen had lost some of his desire to take his place at the banquet, in the difficulties of the question which had arisen, and in the certainty that nothing material, in the way of gastronomy, would be attempted until he appeared. We would do injustice to his heart, did we not add, also, that he had troublesome qualms of conscience, which intuitively admonished him that the world had dealt hardly with the family of Balthazar. There remained the party of Maso, too, to dispose of, and his character of an upright

as well as of a firm magistrate to maintain. As the crowd diminished, however, he and those near him, descended from their high places, and mixed with the few who occupied the still guarded area in front of the stage.

Balthazar had not stirred from his riveted posture near the table of the notary, for he shrank from encountering, in the company of his wife and daughter, the insults to which he should be exposed now his character was known, by mingling with the crowd, and he waited for a favorable moment to withdraw unseen. Marguerite still stood folding Christine to her bosom, as if jealous of further injury to her beloved. The recreant bridegroom had taken the earliest opportunity to disappear, and was seen no more in Vévey during the remainder of the revels.

Peterchen cast a hurried glance at this group, as his foot reached the ground, and then turning toward the thieftakers, he made a sign for them to advance with their prisoners.

"Thy evil tongue has balked one of the most engaging rites of the day's festival, knave," observed the bailiff, addressing Pippo with a certain magisterial reproof in his voice. "I should do well to send thee to Berne, to serve a month among those who sweep the city streets, as a punishment for thy raven throat. What, in the name of all thy Roman saints and idols, hadst thou against the happiness of these honest people, that thou must come, in this unseemly manner, to destroy it?"

"Naught but the love of truth, Eccellenza, and a just horror of the man of blood."

"That thou and all like thee should have a horror of the ministers of the law, I can understand; and it is more than probable that thy dislike will extend to me, for I am about to pronounce a just judgment on thee and thy fellows for disturbing the harmony of the day, and especially for having been guilty of the enormous crime of an outrage on our agents."

"Couldst thou grant me a moment's leave?" asked the Genoese in his ear.

"An hour, noble Gaetano, if thou wilt."

The two then conversed apart for a minute or more. During the brief dialogue, the Signor Grimaldi occasionally looked at the quiet and apparently contrite Maso, and stretched his arms toward the Lemman, in a way to give the observers an inkling of his subject. The countenance of

the Herr Hofmeister changed from official sternness to an expression of decent concern as he listened, and ere long it took a decidedly forgiving laxity of muscle. When the other had done speaking, he bowed a ready assent to what he had just heard, and returned to the prisoners.

"As I have just observed," he resumed, "it is my duty now to pronounce finally on these men and their conduct. Firstly, they are strangers, and as such are not only ignorant of our laws, but entitled to our hospitality; next, they have been punished sufficiently for the original offence, by being abridged of the day's sports; and as to the crime committed against ourselves, in the person of our agents, it is freely forgiven, for forgiveness is a generous quality, and becomes a paternal form of rule. Depart therefore, of God's name! all of ye to a man, and remember henceforth to be discreet. Signore, and you, Herr Baron, shall we to the banquet?"

The two old friends had already moved onward, in close and earnest discourse, and the bailiff was obliged to seek out another companion. None offered at the moment, but Sigismund, who had stood since quitting the stage, in an attitude of complete indecision and helplessness, notwithstanding his great physical energy and his usual moral readiness to act. Taking the arm of the young soldier, with the disregard of ceremony that denotes a sense of condescension, the bailiff drew him away from the spot, heedless himself of the other's reluctance, and without observing that, in consequence of the general desertion, for few were disposed to indulge their compassion unless it were in company with the honored and noble, Adelheid was left absolutely alone with the family of Balthazar.

"This office of a headsman, Herr Sigismund," commenced the unobservant Peterchen, too full of his own opinions, and much too sensible of his right to be delivered of them in the presence of his junior and inferior, to note the youth's trouble, "is at the best but a disgusting affair; though, we, of station and authority, are obliged prudently to appear to deem it otherwise before the people, in our own interest. Thou hast had occasion to remark often, in the discipline of thy military followers, that a false coloring must be put upon things, lest they who are very necessary to the state should not think the state quite so necessary to them. What is thy opinion, Captain Sigismund, as a man who has yet his hopes and his views of the softer

sex, of this act of Jacques Colis? Is it conduct to be approved of, or to be condemned?"

"I deem him a heartless, mercenary miscreant!"

The suppressed energy with which these unexpected words were uttered caused the bailiff to stop and to look up in his companion's face, as if to ask its reason. But there all was already calm, for the young man had too long been accustomed to drill its expression, when the sensitive sore of his origin was probed, as so frequently happened, to permit the momentary weakness long to maintain its ascendancy.

"Aye, this is the opinion of thy years," resumed Peterchen. "Thou art at a time of life when we esteem a pretty face and a mellow eye of more account even than gold. But we put on our interested spectacles after thirty, and seldom see anything very admirable, that is not at the same time very lucrative. Here is Melchior de Willading's daughter, now, a woman to set a city in a blaze, for she hath wit, and lands, and beauty, besides good blood;—what, for instance, is thy opinion of her merit?"

"That she is deserving of all the happiness that every human excellence ought to confer!"

"Hum—thou art nearer to thirty than I had thought thee, Herr Sigismund! But touching this Balthazar, thou art not to believe, on account of the few words of grace which fell from me, that my aversion for the wretch is less than thine, or than that of any other honest man; but it would be unseemly and unwise in a bailiff to desert the last minister of the law's decrees in the face of the public. There are feelings and sentiments that are natural to us all, and among them are to be classed respect and honor for the well and nobly born" (the discourse was in German), "and hatred and contempt for those who are condemned of men. These are feelings which belong to human nature itself, and God forbid that I, a man already past the age of romance, should really entertain any sentiments that are not strictly human."

"Do they not rather belong to abuses—to our prejudices?"

"The difference is not material, in a practical view, young man. That which is fairly bred into the mind, by discipline and habit, gets to be stronger than instinct, or even than one of the senses. Let there be an unseemly sight, or a foul smell near thee, and thou hast only to turn

thy eyes, or hold thy nose, to be rid of it ; but I could never find the means to lessen a prejudice that was once fairly seated in the mind. Thou mayest look whither thou wilt, and shut out the unsavory odors of the imagination by all the means thou canst invent, but if a man is, in truth, condemned of opinion, he might as well make his appeal to God at once for justice, as to any mercy he is likely to receive from men. This much have I learned in my experience as a public functionary."

"I should hope that these are not the legal dogmas of our ancient canton," returned the youth, conquering his feelings, though it cost him a severe effort.

"As far from it as Basle is from Coire. We hold no such discreditable doctrines. I challenge the world to show a state that possesses a fairer set of maxims than ourselves, and we even endeavor to make our practice chime in with our opinions, whenever it can be done in safety. No, in these particulars, Berne is a paragon of a community, and as rarely says one thing and does another, as any government you shall see. What I now tell thee, young man, is said to thee in the familiarity of a fête, as thou know'st, in which there have been some fooleries, to open confidence and to loosen the tongue. We openly and loudly profess great truth and equality before the law, saving the city's rights, and to take holy, heavenly, upright justice for our guide in all matters of theory. Himmel ! If thou wouldst have thy affair decided on principle, go before the councils, or the magistracy of the canton, and thou shalt hear such wisdom, and witness such keen-sightedness into chicanery, as would have honored Solomon himself !"

"And notwithstanding this, prejudice is a general master."

"How canst thou have it otherwise ? Is not a man a man ? Will he not lean as he has been weighed upon ?—does not the tree grow in the way the twig is bent ? No, while I adore justice, Herr Sigismund, as becomes a bailiff, I confess to both prejudice and partiality, mentally considered. Now, yonder maiden, the pretty Christine, lost some of her grace in my eyes, as no doubt she did in thine, when the truth came to be known that she was Balthazar's child. The girl is fair and modest and winning in her way ; but there is something—I cannot tell thee what—but a certain damnable something—a taint—a color—a

hue—a—a—a—that showed her origin the instant I heard who was her parent—was it not so with thee?”

“When her origin was proved, but not previously.”

“Aye, of a certainty; I mean not otherwise. But a thing is not seen any the worse because it is seen thoroughly, although it may be seen falsely when there are false covers to conceal its ugliness. Particularity is necessary to philosophy. Ignorance is a mask to conceal the little details that are necessary to knowledge. Your Moor might pass for a Christian in a mask, but strip him of his covering and the true shade of the skin is seen. Didst thou not observe, for instance, in all that touches feminine grace and perfection, the manifest difference between the daughter of Melchior de Willading and the daughter of this Balthazar?”

“There was the difference between a maiden of most honored and happy extraction and a maiden most miserably condemned!”

“Nay, the Demoiselle de Willading is the fairer.”

“Nature has certainly been most bountiful to the heiress of Willading, Herr Bailiff, who is scarcely less attractive for her female grace and goodness, than she is fortunate in the accidents of birth and condition.”

“I knew thou couldst not, in secret, be of a different mind from the rest of men!” exclaimed Peterchen in triumph, for he took the warmth of his companion’s manner to be a reluctant and half-concealed assent to his own proposition. Here the discourse ended; for, the earnest conference between Melchior and the Signor Grimaldi having terminated, the bailiff hastened to join his more important guests, and Sigismund was released from an examination that had harrowed every feeling of his soul, while he even despised the besotted loquacity of the man who had been the instrument of his torture.

The separation of Adelheid from her father was anticipated and previously provided for; since the men were expected to resort to the banquet at this hour. She had continued near Christine and her mother, therefore, without attracting any unusual attention to her movements, even in those who were the objects of her sympathy, a feeling that was so natural in one of her years and sex. A male attendant, in the livery of her father’s house, remained near her person, a protector who was certain to insure not only her safety in the thronged streets of the town, but to

exact from those whose faculties were beginning to yield to the excesses of the occasion the testimonials of respect that were due to her station. It was under these circumstances, then, that the more honored, and, to the eyes of the uninstructed, the happier of these maidens, approached the other, when curiosity was so far appeased as to have left the family of Balthazar nearly alone in the centre of the square.

"Is there no friendly roof near, to which thou canst withdraw?" asked the heiress of Willading of the mother of the pallid and scarcely conscious Christine; "thou wouldst do better to seek some shelter and privacy for thy unoffending and much injured child. If any that belong to me can be of service, I pray that thou wilt command as freely as if they were followers of thine own."

Marguerite had never before spoken with a female of a rank superior to the ordinary classes. The ample means of both her father's and her husband's family, had furnished all that was necessary to the improvement of the mind of one in her station, and perhaps she had been the gainer, in mere deportment, by having been greatly excluded, by their prejudices, from association with females of her own condition. As is often seen among those who have the thoughts without the conventional usages of a better caste in life, she was slightly tinctured with an exhibition of what might be termed an exaggerated manner, while at the same time it was perfectly free from vulgarity or coarseness. The gentle accents of Adelheid fell on her ear soothingly, and she gazed long and earnestly at the beautiful speaker without a reply.

"Who and what art thou that canst think a headsman's child may receive an insult that is unmerited, and who offerest the service of thy menials, as if the very vassal would not refuse his master's bidding in our behalf!"

"I am Adelheid de Willading, the daughter of the Baron of that name, and one much disposed to temper this cruel blow to the feelings of poor Christine. Suffer that my people seek the means to convey thy child to some other place!"

Marguerite folded her daughter still closer to her bosom, passing a hand across her brow, as if to recall some half-obscured idea.

"I have heard of thee, lady. 'Tis said that thou art kind to the wronged, and of excellent dispositions toward

the unhappy—that thy father's castle is an honored and hospitable abode, which those who enter rarely love to quit. But hast thou well weighed the consequences of this liberality toward a race, that is and has been proscribed of men, from generation to generation—from him who first lent himself to his bloody office with a cruel heart and a greedy desire for gold, to him whose courage is scarcely equal to the disgusting duty? Hast thou bethought thee of this, or hast thou yielded, heedlessly, to a sudden and youthful impulse?”

“Of all this have I thought,” said Adelheid, eagerly; “whatever may be the injustice of others, thou hast none to fear from me.”

Marguerite yielded the form of her child to the support of her father's arm, and drew nearer, with a gaze of earnest and pleased interest, to the blushing but still composed Adelheid. She took the hand of the latter, and, with a look of recognition and intelligence, said slowly, as if communing with herself, rather than speaking to another—

“This is getting to be intelligible!” she murmured; “there is still gratitude and creditable feeling in the world. I can understand why we are not revolting to this fair being, she has a sense of justice that is stronger than her prejudices. We have done her service, and she is not ashamed of the source whence it has come!”

The heart of Adelheid throbbed quick and violently; and, for a moment, she doubted her ability to command her feelings. But the pleasing conviction that Sigismund had been honorable and delicate, even to his most sacred and confidential communications with his own mother, came to relieve her, and to make her momentarily happy; since nothing is so painful to the pure mind, as to think those they love have acted unworthily; or nothing so grateful, as the assurance that they merit the esteem we have been induced liberally and confidently to bestow.

“You do me no more than justice,” returned the pleased listener of this flattering and seemingly involuntary opinion—“we are indeed—indeed, we are truly grateful; but had we not reason for the sacred obligations of gratitude, I think we could still be just. Will you not now consent that my people should aid you?”

“This is not necessary, lady. Send away thy followers, for their presence will draw unpleasant observations on

our movements. The town is now occupied with feasts, and, as we have not blindly overlooked the necessity of a retreat for the hunted and persecuted, we will take the opportunity to withdraw unseen. As for thyself——”

“I would be near this innocent at a moment so trying,” added Adelheid, earnestly, and with that visible sympathy which rarely fails to meet an echo.

“Heaven bless thee! Heaven bless thee, sweet girl! And Heaven will bless thee, for few wrongs go unrequited in this life, and little good without its reward. Send thy followers away, or if thy habits require their watchfulness, let them be near unseen, whilst thou watchest our movements; and when the eyes of all are turned on their own pleasures, thou canst follow. Heaven bless thee—aye, and Heaven will!”

Marguerite then led her daughter toward one of the least frequented streets. She was accompanied by the silent Balthazar, and closely watched by one of the menials of Adelheid. When fairly housed, the domestic returned to show the spot to his mistress, who had appeared to occupy herself with the hundred silly devices that were invented to amuse the multitude. Dismissing her attendants, with an order to remain at hand, however, the heiress of Willading soon found means to enter the humble abode in which the proscribed family had taken refuge, and, as she was expected, she was soon introduced into the chamber where Christine and her mother had taken refuge.

The sympathy of the young and tender Adelheid was precious to one of the character of Christine. They wept together, for the weakness of her sex prevailed over the pride of the former, when she found herself unrestrained by the observation of the world, and she gave way to the torrent of feeling that broke through its bounds, in spite of her endeavors to control it. Marguerite was the only spectator of this silent but intelligible communion between these two young and pure spirits, and her soul was shaken by the unlooked-for commiseration of one so honored and who was usually esteemed so happy.

“Thou hast the consciousness of our wrongs,” she said, when the first burst of emotion had a little subsided. “Thou canst then believe that a headsman’s child is like the offspring of another, and is not to be hunted of men like the young of a wolf.”

"Mother, this is the Baron de Willading's heiress," said Christine; "would she come here, did she not pity us?"

"Yes, she can pity us—and yet I find it hard even to be pitied! Sigismund has told us of her goodness, and she may, in truth, feel for the wretched!"

The allusion to her son caused the temples of Adelheid to burn like fire, while there was a chill, resembling that of death, at her heart. The first arose from the quick and uncontrollable alarm of female sensitiveness; the last was owing to the shock inseparable from being presented with this vivid, palpable picture of Sigismund's close affinity with the family of an executioner. She could have better borne it, had Marguerite spoken of her son less familiarly, or with more of that feigned ignorance of each other, which, without stopping to scan its fitness, she had been led to think existed between the young man and his family.

"Mother!" exclaimed Christine reproachfully, and in surprise, as if a great indiscretion had been thoughtlessly committed.

"It matters not, child; it matters not. I saw by the kindling eye of Sigismund to-day, that our secret will not much longer be kept. The noble boy must show more energy than those who have gone before him; he must quit forever a country in which he was condemned, even before he was born."

"I shall not deny that your connection with Monsieur Sigismund is known to me," said Adelheid, summoning all her resolution to make an avowal which put her at once into the confidence of Balthazar's family. "You are acquainted with a heavy debt of gratitude we owe your son, and it will explain the nature of the interest I now feel in your wrongs."

The keen eye of Marguerite studied the crimsoned features of Adelheid till forgetfulness got the better of discretion. The search was anxious, rather than triumphant, the feeling most dreaded by its subject; and, when her eyes were withdrawn, the mother of the youth became thoughtful and pensive. This expressive communion produced a deep and embarrassing silence, which each would gladly have broken, had they not both been irresistibly tonguetied by the rapidity and intensity of their thoughts.

"We know that Sigismund hath been of service to thee," observed Marguerite, who always addressed her gay companion with the familiarity that belonged to her greater

age, rather than with the respect which Adelheid had been accustomed to receive from those who were of a rank inferior to her own. "The brave boy hath spoken of it, though he hath spoken of it modestly."

"He had every right to do himself justice in his communications with those of his own family. Without his aid, my father would have been childless; and without his brave support, the child fatherless. Twice has he stood between us and death."

"I have heard of this," returned Marguerite, again fastening her penetrating eye on the tell-tale features of Adelheid, which never failed to brighten and glow, whenever there was allusion to the courage and self-devotion of him she secretly loved. "As to what thou say'st of the intimacy of our poor boy with those of his blood, cruel circumstances stand between us and our wishes. If Sigismund has told thee of whom he comes, he has also most probably told thee of the manner in which he passes, in the world, for that which he is not."

"I believe he has not withheld anything that he knew, and which it was proper to communicate to me," answered Adelheid, dropping her eyes before the attentive, expectant look of Marguerite. "He has spoken freely, and——"

"Thou wouldst have said——"

"Honorably, and as became a soldier," continued Adelheid, firmly.

"He has done well! This lightens my heart of one burden at least. No; God has destined us to this fate, and it would have grieved me that a son of mine should have failed of principle in an affair, of all others, in which it is most wanted. You look amazed, lady!"

"These sentiments, in one so situated, surprise as much as they delight me! If anything could excuse some looseness in the manner of regarding the usual ties of life, it would surely be to find one's self so placed, by no misconduct of our own, as to be a butt to the world's dislike and injustice; and yet, here, where there was reason to expect some resentment against fortune, I meet with sentiments that would honor a throne!"

"Thou thinkest as one more accustomed to consider thy fellow creatures through the means of what men fancy, than through things as they are. This is the picture of youth, and inexperience, and innocence; but it is not the picture of life. 'Tis misfortune, and not prosperity, that

hasteneth by proving our insufficiency for true happiness, and by leading the soul to depend on a power greater than any that is to be found on earth. We fall before the temptation of happiness, when we rise in adversity. If thou thinkest, innocent one, that noble and just sentiments belong to the fortunate, thou trustest to a false guide. There are evils which flesh cannot endure, it is true ; but, removed from these overwhelming wants, we are strongest in the right when least tempted by vanity and ambition. More starving beggars abstain from stealing the crust they crave, than pampered gluttons deny themselves the luxury that kills them. They that live under the rod, see and dread the hand that holds it ; they who riot in earth's glories, come at last to think they deserve the short-lived distinctions they enjoy. When thou goest down into the depths of misery, thou hast naught to fear except the anger of God ! It is when raised above others that thou shouldst tremble most for thine own safety."

"This is not the manner in which the world is used to reason."

"Because the world is governed by those whose interest it is to pervert truth to their own objects, and not by those whose duties run hand in hand with the right. But we will say no more of this, lady ; there is one that feels too acutely just now to admit truth to be too freely spoken."

"Dost feel thyself better, and more able to listen to thy friends, dear Christine ?" asked Adelheid, taking the hand of the repudiated and deserted girl with the tenderness of an affectionate sister.

Until now the sufferer had only spoken the few words related, in mild reproof of her mother's indiscretion. That little had been uttered with parched lips and a choked voice, while the hue of her features was deadly pale, and her whole countenance betrayed intense mental anguish. But this display of interest in one of her own years and sex, of whose excellences she had been accustomed to hear such fervid descriptions from the warm-hearted Sigismund, and of whose sincerity she was assured by the subtle and quick instinct that unites the innocent and young, caused a quick and extreme change in her sensibilities. The grief which had been struggling and condensed, now flowed more freely from her eyes, and she threw herself sobbing and weeping, in a paroxysm of gentle, but overwhelming, feeling, on the bosom of this new-found friend.

The experienced Marguerite smiled at this manifestation of kindness on the part of Adelheid, though even this expression of satisfaction was austere and regulated in one who had so long stood at bay with the world. And, after a short pause, she left the room, under the belief that such a communion with a spirit, pure and inexperienced as her own, a communion so unusual to her daughter, would be more likely to produce a happy effect, if left to themselves, than when restrained by her presence.

The two girls wept in common for a long time after Marguerite had disappeared. The intercourse, chastened as it was by sorrow, and rendered endearing on the one side by a confiding ingenuousness, and on the other by generous pity, caused both to live in that short period, as it were, months together in a near and dear intimacy. Confidence is not always the growth of time. There are minds that meet each other with a species of affinity that resembles the cohesive property of matter, and with a promptitude and faith that only belongs to the purer essence of which they are composed. But when this attraction of the ethereal part of the being is aided by the feelings that have been warmed by an interest so tender as that which the hearts of both the maidens felt in a common object, its power is not only stronger, but quicker, in making itself felt. So much was already known by each of the other's character, fortunes, and hopes (always with the exception of Adelheid's most sacred secret, which Sigismund cherished as a deposit by far too sacred to be shared even with his sister), that the meeting under no circumstances could have been that of strangers, and their mutual knowledge came as an assistant to break down the barriers of those forms which were so irksome to their longings for a freer interchange of feeling and thought. Adelheid possessed too much intellectual tact to have recourse to the everyday language of consolation. When she did speak, which, as became her superior rank and less embarrassed situation, she was the first to do, it was in general but friendly allusions.

"Thou wilt go with us to Italy, in the morning," she said, drying her eyes; "my father quits Blonay, in company with the Signor Grimaldi, with to-morrow's sun, and thou wilt be of our company?"

"Where thou wilt—anywhere with thee—anywhere to hide my shame!"

The blood mounted to the temples of Adelheid, her air even appeared imposing to the eyes of the artless and unpractised Christine, as she answered—

“Shame is a word that applies to the mean and mercenary, to the vile and unfaithful,” she said, with womanly and virtuous indignation; “but not to thee, love.”

“Oh! do not, do not condemn him,” whispered Christine, covering her face with her hands. “He has found himself unequal to bear the burden of our degradation, and he should be spoken of in pity rather than with hatred.” Adelheid was silent; but she regarded the poor trembling girl, whose head now nestled in her bosom, with melancholy concern.

“Didst thou know him well?” she asked, in a low tone, following rather the chain of her own thoughts, than reflecting on the nature of the question she put. “I had hoped that this refusal would bring no other pain than the unavoidable mortification which I fear belongs to the weakness of our sex and our habits.”

“Thou knowest not how dear preference is to the despised!—how cherished the thought of being loved becomes to those, who, out of their own narrow limits of natural friends, have been accustomed to meet only with contempt and aversion! Thou hast always been known, and courted, and happy! Thou canst not know how dear it is to the despised to seem even to be preferred!”

“Nay, say not this, I pray thee!” answered Adelheid, hurriedly, and with a throb of anguish at her heart; “there is little in this life that speaks fairly for itself. We are not always what we seem; and if we were, and far more miserable than anything but vice can make us, there is another state of being, in which justice—pure, unalloyed justice—will be done.”

“I will go with thee to Italy,” answered Christine, looking calm and resolved, while a glow of holy hope bloomed on each cheek; “when all is over, we will go together to a happier world!”

Adelheid folded the stricken and sensitive plant to her bosom. Again they wept together, but it was with a milder and sweeter sorrow than before.

CHAPTER XX.

"I'll show thee the best springs ; I'll pluck thee berries."—*Tempest*.

THE day dawned clear and cloudless on the Leman, the morning that succeeded the Abbaye des Vignerons. Hundreds among the frugal and time-saving Swiss had left the town before the appearance of the light, and many strangers were crowding into the barks as the sun came bright and cheerfully over the rounded and smiling summits of the neighboring cotes. At this early hour all in and around the rock-seated castle of Blonay were astir and in motion. Menials were running with hurried air, from room to room, from court to terrace, and from lawn to tower. The peasants in the adjoining fields rested on their utensils of husbandry, in gaping, admiring attention to the preparations of their superiors. For though we are not writing of a strictly feudal age, the events it is our business to record took place long before the occurrence of those great political events which have since so materially changed the social state of Europe. Switzerland was then a sealed country to most of those who dwelt even in the adjoining nations, and the present advanced condition of roads and inns was quite unknown, not only to these mountaineers, but throughout the rest of what was then much more properly called the exclusively civilized portion of the globe, than it is to-day. Even horses were not often used in the passage of the Alps, but recourse was had to the surer-footed mule by the traveller, and, not unfrequently, by the more practised carrier and smuggler of those rude paths. Roads existed, it is true, as in other parts of Europe, in the countries of the plain, if any portion of the great undulating surface of that region deserve the name ; but once within the mountains, with the exception of very inartificial wheel-tracks in the straitened and glen-like valleys, the hoof alone was to be trusted or indeed used.

The long train of travellers, then, that left the gates of Blonay, just as the fog began to stir on the wide alluvial meadows of the Rhone, were all in the saddle. A courier, accompanied by a sumpter-mule, had departed over-night to prepare the way for those who were to follow, and ac-

tive, young mountaineers had succeeded, from time to time, charged with different orders, issued in behalf of their comforts.

As the cavalcade passed beneath the arch of the great gate, the lively, spirit-stirring horn sounded a farewell air, to which custom had attached the signification of good wishes. It took the way toward the level of the Lemane by means of a winding and picturesque bridle-path that led, among alpine meadows, groves, rocks, and hamlets, fairly to the water side. Roger de Blonay and his two principal guests rode in front, the former seated on a war-horse that he had ridden years before as a soldier, and the two latter well mounted on beasts prepared for, and accustomed to, the mountains. Adelheid and Christine came next, riding by themselves, in the modest reserve of their maiden condition. Their discourse was low, confidential, and renewed at intervals. A few menials followed, and then came Sigismund at the side of the Signor Grimaldi's friend, and one of the family of Blonay, the latter of whom was destined to return with the Baron, after doing honor to their guests by seeing them as far as Villeneuve. The rear was brought up by muleteers, domestics, and those who led the beasts that bore the baggage. All of the former who intended to cross the Alps carried the fire-arms of the period at their saddle-bows, and each had his rapier, his *couteau de chasse*, or his weapon of more military fashion, so disposed about his person as to denote it was considered an arm for whose use some occasion might possibly occur.

As the departure from Blonay was unaccompanied by any of those leave-takings which usually impress a touch of melancholy on the traveller, most of the cavalcade, as they issued into the pure and exhilarating air of the morning, were sufficiently disposed to enjoy the loveliness of the landscape, and to indulge in the cheerfulness and delight that a scene so glorious is apt to awaken in all who are alive to the beauties of nature.

Adelheid gladly pointed out to her companions the various objects of the view, as a means of recalling the thoughts of Christine from her own particular griefs, which were heightened by regret for the loss of her mother, from whom she was now seriously separated for the first time in her life, since their communications, though secret, had been constant during the years she had

dwelt under another roof. The latter gratefully lent herself to the kind intentions of her new friend, and endeavored to be pleased with all she beheld, though it was such pleasure as the sad and mourning admit with a jealous reservation of their own secret causes of woe.

"Yonder tower, toward which we advance, is Châtelard," said the heiress of Willading to the daughter of Balthazar, in the pursuit of her kind intention; "a hold, nearly as ancient and honorable as this we have just quitted, though not so constantly the dwelling of the same family; for those of Blonay have been a thousand years dwellers on the same rock, always favorably known for their faith and courage."

"Surely, if there is anything in life that can compensate for its every-day evils," observed Christine, in a manner of mild regret, and perhaps with the perversity of grief, "it must be to have come from those who have always been known and honored among the great and happy! Even virtue and goodness, and great deeds, scarce give a respect like that we feel for the Sire de Blonay, whose family has been seated, as thou hast just said, a thousand years on that rock above us!"

Adelheid was mute. She appreciated the feeling which had so naturally led her companion to a reflection like this, and she felt the difficulty of applying balm to a wound as deep as that which had been inflicted on her companion.

"We are not always to suppose those the most happy that the world most honors," she at length answered; "the respect to which we are accustomed comes in time to be necessary, without being a source of pleasure; and the hazard of incurring its loss is more than equal to the satisfaction of its possession."

"Thou wilt at least admit that to be despised and shunned is a curse to which nothing can reconcile us."

"We will speak now of other things, dear. It may be long ere either of us again see this grand display of rock and water, of brown mountain and shining glacier; we will not prove ourselves ungrateful for the happiness we have by repining for that which is impossible."

Christine quietly yielded to the kind intention of her new friend, and they rode on in silence, picking their way along the winding-path, until the whole party, after a long but pleasant descent, reached the road, which is nearly

washed by the waters of the lake. There has already been allusion, in the earlier pages of our work, to the extraordinary beauties of the route near this extremity of the Lemman. After climbing to the height of the mild and healthful Montreux, the cavalcade again descended under a canopy of nut-trees, to the gate of Chillon, and sweeping around the margin of the sheet, it reached Villeneuve by the hour that had been named for an early morning repast. Here, all dismounted, and refreshed themselves awhile, when Roger de Blonay and his attendants, after many exchanges of warm and sincere good wishes, took their final leave.

The sun was scarcely yet visible in the deep glens, when those who were destined for St. Bernard were again in the saddle. The road now necessarily left the lake, traversing those broad alluvial bottoms which have been deposited during thirty centuries by the washings of the Rhone, aided, if faith is to be given to geological symptoms and to ancient traditions, by certain violent convulsions of nature. For several hours our travellers rode amid such a deep fertility, and such a luxuriance of vegetation, that their path bore more analogy to an excursion on the wide plains of Lombardy, than to one amid the usual Swiss scenery; although, unlike the boundless expanse of the Italian garden, the view was limited on each side by perpendicular barriers of rock, that were piled for thousands of feet into the heavens, and which were merely separated from each other by a league or two, a distance that dwindled to miles in its effect on the eye, a consequence of the grandeur of the scale on which nature has reared these vast piles. It was high noon when Melchior de Willading and his venerable friend led the way across the foaming Rhone at the celebrated bridge of St. Maurice. Here the country of the Valais, then, like Geneva, an ally, and not a confederate of the Swiss cantons, was entered, and all objects, both animate and inanimate, began to assume that mixture of the grand, the sterile, the luxuriant, and the revolting, for which this region is so generally known. Adelheid gave an involuntary shudder, her imagination having been prepared by rumor for even more than the truth would have given reason to expect, when the gate of St. Maurice swung back upon its hinges, literally inclosing the party in this wild, desolate and yet romantic region. As they proceeded along the Rhone, however, she and those of her companions to whom the scene

was new, were constantly wondering at some unlooked-for discrepancy, that drove them from admiration to disgust—from the exclamations of delight to the chill of disappointment. The mountains on every side were dreary, and without the rich relief of the pastured eminences, but most of the valley was rich and generous. In one spot a *sac d'eau*, one of those reservoirs of water which form among the glaciers on the summits of the rocks, had broken, and descending like a water-spout, it had swept before it every vestige of cultivation, covering wide breadths of the meadows with a *débris* that resembled chaos. A frightful barrenness, and the most smiling fertility, were in absolute contact; patches of green, that had been accidentally favored by some lucky formation of the ground, sometimes appearing like oases of the desert, in the very centre of a sterility that would put the labor and the art of man at defiance for a century. In the midst of this terrific picture of want sat a *crétin*, with his semi-human attributes, the lolling tongue, the blunted faculties, and the degraded appetites, to complete the desolation. Issuing from this belt of annihilated vegetations the scene became again as pleasant as the fancy could desire, or the eye crave. Fountains leaped from rock to rock in the sun's rays; the valley was green and gentle; the mountains began to show varied and pleasing forms; and happy smiling faces appeared, whose freshness and regularity were perhaps of a cast superior to that of most of the Swiss. In short, the Valais was then, as now, a country of opposite extremes, but in which, perhaps, there is a predominance of the repulsive and inhospitable.

It was fairly nightfall, notwithstanding the trifling distance they had journeyed, when the travellers reached Martigny, where dispositions had previously been made for their reception during the hours of sleep. Here preparations were made to seek their rest at an early hour, in order to be in readiness for the fatiguing toil of the following day.

Martigny is situated at the point where the great valley of the Rhone changes its direction from a north and south to an east and west course, and it is the spot whence three of the celebrated mountain paths diverge, to make as many passages of the upper Alps. Here are the two routes of the great and little St. Bernard, both of which lead into Italy, and that of the Col-de-Balme, which crosses a spur

of the Alps into Savoy toward the celebrated valley of Chamouni. It was the intention of the Baron de Willading and his friend to journey by the former of these roads, as has so often been mentioned in these pages, their destination being the capital of Piedmont. The passage of the great St. Bernard, though so long known by its ancient and hospitable convent, the most elevated habitation in Europe, and in these later times so famous for the passage of a conquering army, is but a secondary Alpine pass, considered in reference to the grandeur of its scenery. The ascent, so inartificial even to this hour, is long and comparatively without danger, and in general it is sufficiently direct, there being no very precipitous rise like those of the Gemmi, the Grimsel, and various other passes in Switzerland and Italy, except at the very neck, or col, of the mountain, where the rock is to be literally climbed on the rude and broad steps that so frequently occur among the paths of the Alps and the Apennines. The fatigue of this passage comes, therefore, rather from its length, and the necessity of unremitted diligence, than from any excessive labor demanded by the ascent; and the reputation acquired by the great captain of our age, in leading an army across its summit, has been obtained more by the military combinations of which it formed the principal feature, the boldness of the conception, and the secrecy and promptitude with which so extensive an operation was effected than by the physical difficulties that were overcome. In the latter particular, the passage of St. Bernard, as this celebrated coup de main is usually called, has frequently been outdone in our own wilds; for armies have often traversed regions of broad streams, broken mountains, and uninterrupted forests, for weeks at a time, in which the mere bodily labor of any given number of days would be found to be greater than that endured on this occasion by the followers of Napoleon. The estimate we attach to every exploit is so dependent on the magnitude of its results, that men rarely come to a perfectly impartial judgment on its merits; the victory or defeat, however simple or bloodless, that shall shake or assure the interests of civilized society, being always esteemed by the world an event of greater importance than the happiest combinations of thought and valor that affect only the welfare of some remote and unknown people. By the just consideration of this truth, we come to understand the

value of a nation's possessing confidence in itself, extensive power, and a unity commensurate to its means ; since small and divided States waste their strength in acts too insignificant for general interest, frittering away their mental riches, no less than their treasure and blood, in supporting interests that fail to enlist the sympathies of any beyond the pale of their own borders. The nation which, by the adverse circumstances of numerical inferiority, poverty of means, failure of enterprise, or want of opinion, cannot sustain its own citizens in the acquisition of a just renown, is deficient in one of the first and most indispensable elements of greatness ; glory, like riches, feeding itself, and being most apt to be found where its fruits have already accumulated. We see, in this fact, among other conclusions, the importance of an acquisition of such habits of manliness of thought as will enable us to decide on the merits and demerits of what is done among ourselves, and of shaking off that dependence on others which is too much the custom of some among us to dignify with the pretending title of deference to knowledge and taste, but which, in truth, possesses some such share of true modesty and diffidence as the footman is apt to exhibit when exulting in the renown of his master.

This little digression has induced us momentarily to overlook the incidents of the tale. Few who possess the means, venture into the stormy regions of the upper Alps, at the late season in which the present party reached the hamlet of Martigny, without seeking the care of one or more suitable guides. The services of those men are useful in a variety of ways, but in none more than in offering the advice which long familiarity with the signs of the heavens, the temperature of the air, and the direction of the winds, enables them to give. The Baron de Willading, and his friend, immediately dispatched a messenger for a mountaineer, of the name of Pierre Dumont, who enjoyed a fair name for fidelity, and who was believed to be better acquainted with all the difficulties of the ascent and descent, than any other who journeyed among the glens of that part of the Alps. At the present day, when hundreds ascend to the convent from curiosity alone, every peasant of sufficient strength and intelligence becomes a guide, and the little community of the Lower Valais finds the transit of the idle and rich such a fruitful source of revenue, that it has been induced to regulate the whole by very useful

and just ordinances; but at the period of the tale, this Pierre was the only individual, who, by fortunate concurrences, had obtained a name among affluent foreigners, and who was at all in demand with that class of travellers. He was not long in presenting himself in the public-room of the inn—a hale, florid, muscular man of sixty, with every appearance of permanent health and vigor, but with a slight and nearly imperceptible difficulty of breathing.

“Thou art Pierre Dumont?” observed the Baron, studying the open physiognomy and well-set frame of the Valaisan, with satisfaction. “Thou hast been mentioned by more than one traveller in his book.”

The stout mountaineer raised himself in pride, and endeavored to acknowledge the compliment in the manner of his well-meant but rude courtesy; for refinement did not then extend its finesse and its deceit among the glens of Switzerland.

“They have done me honor, monsieur,” he said: “it has been my good fortune to cross the Col with many brave gentlemen and fair ladies—and in two instances with princes.” (Though a sturdy republican, Pierre was not insensible to worldly rank.) “The pious monks know me well; and they who enter the convent are not the worse received for being my companions. I shall be glad to lead so fair a party from our cold valley into the sunny glens of Italy, for, if the truth must be spoken, nature has placed us on the wrong side of the mountain for our comfort, though we have our advantage over those who live even in Turin and Milan, in matters of greater importance.”

“What can be the superiority of a Valaisan over the Lombard or the Piedmontese?” demanded the Signor Grimaldi quickly, like a man who was curious to hear the reply. “A traveller should seek all kinds of knowledge, and I take this to be a newly discovered fact.”

“Liberty, signore! We are our own masters; we have been so since the day when our fathers sacked the castles of the barons, and compelled their tyrants to become their equals. I think of this each time I reach the warm plains of Italy, and return to my cottage a more contented man, for the reflection.”

“Spoken like a Swiss, though it is uttered by an ally of the cantons!” cried Melchior de Willading, heartily. “This is the spirit, Gaetano, which sustains our mountain-

eers, and renders them more happy amid their frosts and rocks, than thy Genoese on his warm and glowing bay."

"The word liberty, Melchior, is more used than understood, and as much abused as used," returned the Signor Grimaldi gravely. "A country on which God hath laid his finger in displeasure as on this, needs have some such consolation as the phantom with which the honest Pierre appears to be so well satisfied. But, signor guide, have many travellers tried the passage of late, and what dost thou think of our prospects in making the attempt? We hear gloomy tales, sometimes, of thy alpine paths in that Italy thou hold'st so cheap."

"Your pardon, noble signore, if the frankness of a mountaineer has carried me too far. I do not undervalue your Piedmont, because I love our Valais more. A country may be excellent, even though another should be better. As for the travellers, none of note have gone up the Col of late, though there have been the usual number of vagabonds and adventurers. The savor of the convent kitchen will reach the noses of these knaves here in the valley, though we have a long twelve leagues to journey in getting from one to the other."

The Signor Grimaldi waited until Adelheid and Christine, who were preparing to retire for the night, were out of hearing, and he resumed his questions.

"Thou has not spoken of the weather?"

"We are in one of the most uncertain and treacherous months of the good season, messieurs. The winter is gathering among the upper Alps, and in a month in which the frosts are flying about like uneasy birds that do not know where to alight, one can hardly say whether he hath need of his cloak or not."

"San Francesco! Dost think I am dallying with thee, friend, about a thickness more or less of cloth! I am hinting at avalanches and falling rocks—at whirlwinds and tempests!"

Pierre laughed and shook his head, though he answered vaguely as became his business.

"These are Italian opinions of our hills, signore," he said; "they savor of the imagination. Our pass is not as often troubled with the avalanche as some that are known, even in the melting snows. Had you looked at the peaks from the lake, you would have seen that, the hoary glaciers, excepted, they are still all brown and naked. The snow

must fall from the heavens before it can fall in the avalanche, and we are yet, I think, a few days from the true winter."

"Thy calculations are made with nicety, friend," returned the Genoese, not sorry, however, to hear the guide speak with so much apparent confidence of the weather, "and we are obliged to thee in proportion. What of the travellers thou hast named? Are there brigands on our path?"

"Such rogues have been known to infest the place, but in general, there is too little to be gained for the risk. Your rich traveller is not an every-day sight among our rocks; and you well know, signore, that there may be too few, as well as too many, on a path, for your freebooter."

The Italian was distrustful by habit on all such subjects, and he threw a quick suspicious glance at the guide. But the frank open countenance of Pierre removed all doubt of his honesty, to say nothing of the effect of a well-established reputation.

"But thou hast spoken of certain vagabonds who have preceded us?"

"In that particular, matters might be better," answered the plain-minded mountaineer, dropping his head in an attitude of meditation so naturally expressed as to give additional weight to his words. "Many of bad appearance have certainly gone up to-day; such as a Neapolitan named Pippo, who is anything but a saint—a certain pilgrim, who will be nearer heaven at the convent than he will be at the death—St. Pierre pray for me if I do the man injustice!—and one or two more of the same brood. There is another that hath gone up also, post haste, and with good reason as they say, for he hath made himself the butt of all the jokers in Vévey on account of some foolery in the games of the abbaye—a certain Jacques Colis."

The name was repeated by several near the speaker.

"The same, messieurs. It would seem that the *Sieur Colis* would fain take a maiden to wife in the public sports, and when her birth came to be known, that his bride was no other than the child of Balthazar, the common headsmen of Berne!"

A general silence betrayed the embarrassment of most of the listeners.

"And that tale hath already reached this glen," said Sigismund, in a tone so deep and firm as to cause Pierre

to start, while the two old nobles looked in another direction feigning not to observe what was passing.

"Rumor hath a nimbler foot than a mule, young officer," answered the honest guide. "The tale, as you call it, will have travelled across the mountains sooner than they who bore it—though I never knew how such a miracle could pass—but so it is; report goes faster than the tongue that spreads it, and if there be a little untruth to help it along, the wind itself is scarcely swifter. Honest Jacques Colis has bethought him to get the start of his story, but, my life on it, though he is active enough in getting away from his mockers, that he finds it, with all the additions, safely housed in the inn at Turin when he reaches that city himself."

"These, then, are all?" interrupted the Signor Grimaldi, who saw, by the heaving bosom of Sigismund, that it was time in mercy to interpose.

"Not so, signore—there is still another, and one I like less than any. A countryman of your own, who, impudently enough, calls himself *Il Maledetto*."

"Maso!"

"The very same."

"Honest, courageous Maso, and his noble dog?"

"Signore, you describe the man so well in some things, that I wonder that you know so little of him in others. Maso hath not his equal on the road for activity and courage, and the beast is second only to our mastiffs of the convent for the same qualities; but when you speak of the master's honesty, you speak of that for which the world gives him little credit, and do great disparagement to the brute, which is much the best of the two, in this respect."

"This may be true enough," rejoined the Signor Grimaldi, turning anxiously toward his companions:—"man is a strange compound of good and evil; his acts when left to natural impulses are so different from what they become on calculation that one can scarcely answer for a man of Maso's temperament. We know him to be a most efficient friend, and such a man would be apt to make a very dangerous enemy! His qualities were not given to him by halves. And yet we have a strong circumstance in our favor; for he who hath once done the least service to a fellow creature feels a sort of paternity in him he hath saved, and would be little likely to rob himself of the

pleasure of knowing, that there are some of his kind who owe him a grateful recollection."

This remark was answered by Melchior de Willading, in the same spirit, and the guide, perceiving that he was no longer wanted, withdrew.

Soon after the travellers retired to rest.

CHAPTER XXI.

"As yet the trembling year is unconfirmed,
And winter oft, at eve, resumes the breeze,
Chills the pale morn, and bids his driving sleets
Deform the day delightful;—" THOMSON.

THE horn of Pierre Dumont was blowing beneath the windows of the inn of Martigny, with the peep of dawn. Then followed the appearance of drowsy domestics, the saddling of unwilling mules, and the loading of baggage. A few minutes later the little caravan was assembled, for the cavalcade almost deserved this name, and the whole were in motion for the summits of the Alps.

The travellers now left the valley of the Rhone, to bury themselves amid those piles of misty and confused mountains, which formed the background of the picture they had studied from the Castle of Blonay and the sheet of the Leman. They soon plunged into a glen, and following the windings of a brawling torrent, were led gradually, and by many turnings, into a country of bleak upland pasturage, where the inhabitants gained a scanty livelihood, principally by means of their dairies.

A few leagues above Martigny, the paths again separated, one inclining to the left toward the elevated valley that has since become so celebrated in the legends of this wild region, by the formation of a little lake in its glacier, which becoming too heavy for its foundation, broke through its barrier of ice, and descended in a mountain of water to the Rhone, a distance of many leagues, sweeping before it every vestige of civilization that crossed its course, and even changing in many places the face of nature itself. Here the glittering peak of Velan became visible, and though so much nearer to the eye than when viewed from Vévey, it was still a distant shining pile, grand in its soli-

tude and mystery, on which the sight loved to dwell, as it studies the pure and spotless edges of some sleepy cloud.

It has already been said, that the ascent of the great St. Bernard, with the exception of occasional hills and hollows, is nowhere very precipitous but at the point at which the last rampart of rock is to be overcome. On the contrary, the path, for leagues at a time, passes along tolerably even valleys, though of necessity the general direction is upward, and for most of the distance through a country that admits of cultivation, though the meagreness of the soil, and the shortness of the seasons, render but an indifferent return to the toil of the husbandman. In this respect it differs from most of the other Alpine passes; but if it want the variety, wildness, and sublimity of the Splügen, the St. Gothard, the Gemmi, and the Simplon, it is still an ascent on a magnificent scale, and he who journeys on its path is raised as it were by insensible degrees, to an elevation that gradually changes all his customary associations with the things of the lower world.

From the moment of quitting the inn to that of the first halt, Melchior de Willading and the Signor Grimaldi rode in company, as on the previous day. These old friends had much to communicate in confidential discourse which the presence of Roger de Blonay, and the importunities of the bailiff, had hitherto prevented them from freely saying. Both had thought maturely, too, on the situation of Adelheid, of her hopes, and of her future fortunes, and both had reasoned much as two old nobles of that day, who were not without strong sympathies for their kind while they were too practised to overlook the world and its ties, would be likely to reason on an affair of this delicate nature.

“There came a feeling of regret, perhaps I might fairly call it by its proper name, of envy,” observed the Genoese, in pursuance of the subject which engrossed most of their time and thoughts, as they rode slowly along, the bridles dangling from the necks of their mules,—“there came a feeling of regret, when I first saw the fair creature that calls thee father, Melchior. God has dealt mercifully by me, in respect to many things that make men happy; but he rendered my marriage accursed, not only in its bud, but in its fruit. Thy child is dutiful and loving, all that a father can wish; and yet here is this unusual attachment come to embarrass, if not to defeat, thy fair and just hopes

for her welfare! This is no common affair, that a few threats of bolts and a change of scene will cure, but a rooted affection that is but too firmly based on esteem. By San Francesco, but I think, at times, thou wouldst do well to permit the ceremony!"

"Should it be our fortune to meet with the absconding Jacques Colis at Turin, he might give us different counsel," answered the old Baron dryly.

"That is a dreadful barrier to our wishes! Were the boy anything but a headsman's child! I do not think thou couldst object, Melchior, had he merely come of a hind, or of some common follower of thy family?"

"It were far better that he should have come of one like ourselves, Gaetano. I reason but little on the dogmas of this or that sect in politics; but I feel and think, in this affair, as the parent of an only child. All those usages and opinions in which we are trained, my friend, are so many ingredients in our happiness, let them be silly or wise, just or oppressive; and though I would fain do that which is right to the rest of mankind, I could wish to begin to practise innovation with any other than my own daughter. Let them who like philosophy and justice, and natural rights so well, commence by setting us the example."

"Thou hast hit the stumbling block that causes a thousand well-digested plans for the improvement of the world to fail, honest Melchior. Could we toil with others' limbs, sacrifice with others' groans, and pay with others' means, there would be no end to our industry, our disinterestedness, or our liberality—and yet it were a thousand pities that so sweet a girl and so noble a youth should not yoke!"

"'Twould be a yoke indeed, for a daughter of the house of Willading," returned the graver father, with emphasis. "I have looked at this matter in every face that becomes me, Gaetano, and though I would not rudely repulse one that hath saved my life, by driving him from my company, at a moment when even strangers consort for mutual aid and protection, at Turin we must part forever!"

"I know not how to approve, nor yet how to blame thee, poor Melchior! 'Twas a sad scene, that of the refusal to wed Balthazar's daughter, in the presence of so many thousands!"

"I take it as a happy and kind warning of the precipice to which a foolish tenderness was leading us both, my friend."

"Thou may'st have reason ; and yet I wish thou wert more in error than ever Christian was ! These are rugged mountains, Melchior, and fairly passed, it might be so arranged that the boy should forget Switzerland forever. He might become a Genoese, in which event, dost thou not see the means of overcoming some of the present difficulty ?"

"Is the heiress of my house a vagrant, Signor Grimaldi, to forget her country and birth ?"

"I am childless, in effect, if not in fact ; and where there are the will and the means, the end should not be wanting. We will speak of this under the warmer sun of Italy, which they say is apt to render hearts tender."

"The hearts of the young and amorous, good Gaetano, but, unless much changed of late, it is as apt to harden those of the old, as any sun I know of," returned the Baron, shaking his head, though it much exceeded his power to smile at his own pleasantry when speaking on this painful subject. "Thou knowest that in this matter I act only for the welfare of Adelheid, without thought of myself ; and it would little comport with the honor of a Baron of an ancient house, to be the grandfather of children who come of a race of executioners."

The Signor Grimaldi succeeded better than his friend in raising a smile, for, more accustomed to dive into the depths of human feeling, he was not slow in detecting the mixture of motives that were silently exercising their long-established influence over the heart of his really well-intentioned companion.

"So long as thou speakest of the wisdom of respecting men's opinions, and the danger of wrecking thy daughter's happiness by running counter to their current, I agree with thee to the letter ; but, to me, it seems possible so to place the affair, that the world shall imagine all is in rule, and, by consequence, all proper. If we can overcome ourselves, Melchior, I apprehend no great difficulty in blinding others."

The head of the Bernois dropped upon his breast, and he rode a long distance in that attitude, reflecting on the course it most became him to pursue, and struggling with the conflicting sentiments which troubled his upright but prejudiced mind. As his friend understood the nature of this inward strife, he ceased to speak, and a long silence succeeded the discourse.

It was different with those who followed. Though long accustomed to gaze at their native mountains from a distance, this was the first occasion on which Adelheid and her companion had ever actually penetrated into their glens, or journeyed on their broken and changing faces. The path of St. Bernard, therefore, had all the charm of novelty, and their youthful and ardent minds were soon won from meditating on their own causes of unhappiness, to admiration of the sublime works of nature. The cultivated taste of Adelheid, in particular, was quick in detecting those beauties of a more subtle kind which the less instructed are apt to overlook, and she found additional pleasure in pointing them out to the ingenuous and wondering Christine, who received these her first lessons in that grand communion with nature which is pregnant with so much unalloyed delight, with gratitude and a readiness of comprehension, that amply repaid her instructress. Sigismund was an attentive and pleased listener to what was passing, though one who had so often passed the mountains, and who had seen them familiarly on their warmer and more sunny side, had little to learn, himself, even from so skilful and alluring a teacher. As they ascended, the air became purer and less impregnated with the humidity of its lower currents; changing, by a process as fine as that wrought by a chemical application, the hues and aspect of every object in the view. A vast hill-side lay basking in the sun, which illuminated on its rounded swells a hundred long stripes of grain in every stage of verdure, resembling so much delicate velvet that was thrown in a variety of accidental faces to the light, while the shadows ran away, to speak technically, from this *foyer de lumière* of the picture, in gradations of dusky russet and brown, until the *colonne de vigueur* was obtained in the deep black cast from the overhanging branches of a wood of larch in the depths of some ravine, into which the sight with difficulty penetrated. These were the beauties on which Adelheid most loved to dwell, for they are always the charms that soonest strike the true admirer of nature, when he finds himself raised above the lower and less purified strata of the atmosphere, into the regions of more radiant light and brightness. It is thus that the physical, no less than the moral, vision becomes elevated above the impurities that cling to this nether world, attaining a portion of that spotless and sublime perception as we ascend,

by which we are early assimilated to the truths of creation ; a poetical type of the greater and purer enjoyment we feel, as morally receding from earth, we draw nearer to heaven.

The party rested for several hours, as usual, at the little mountain hamlet of Liddes. At the present time it is not uncommon for the traveller, favored by a wheel-track along this portion of the route, to ascend the mountain and to return to Martigny in the same day. The descent in particular, after reaching the village just named, is soon made ; but at the period of our tale, such an exploit, if ever made, was of very rare occurrence. The fatigue of being in the saddle so many hours compelled our party to remain at the inn much longer than is now practised, and their utmost hope was to be able to reach the convent before the last rays of the sun had ceased to light the glittering peak of Velan.

There occurred here, too, some unexpected detention on the part of Christine, who had retired with Sigismund soon after reaching the inn, and who did not rejoin the party until the impatience of the guide had more than once manifested itself in such complaints as one in his situation is apt to hazard. Adelheid saw with pain, when her friend did at length rejoin them, that she had been weeping bitterly ; but, too delicate to press her for an explanation on a subject in which it was evident the brother and sister did not desire to bestow their confidence, she communicated her readiness to depart to the domestics, without the slightest allusion to the change in Christine's appearance, or to the unexpected delay of which she had been the cause.

Pierre muttered an ave in thankfulness that the long halt was ended. He then crossed himself with one hand, while with the other he flourished his whip, among a crowd of gaping urchins and slaving crétins, to clear the way for those he guided. His followers were, in the main, of a different mood. If the traveller too often reaches the inn hungry and disposed to find fault, he usually quits it good-humored and happy. The restoration, as it is well called in France, effected by means of the larder and the resting of wearied limbs, is usually communicated to the spirits ; and it must be a crusty humor indeed, or singularly bad fare, that prevents a return to a placid state of mind. The party under the direction of Pierre, formed no

exception to the general rule. The two old nobles had so far forgotten the subject of their morning dialogue, as to be facetious; and, ere long, even their gentle companions were disposed to laugh at some of their sallies, in spite of the load of care that weighed so constantly and so heavily on both. In short, such is the waywardness of our feelings, and so difficult is it to be always sorrowful as well as always happy, that the well-satisfied landlady, who had, in truth, received the full value of a very indifferent fare, was ready to affirm, as she courtesied her thanks on the dirty threshold, that a merrier party had never left her door.

"We shall take our revenge out of the casks of the good Augustines to-night for the sour liquor of this inn. Is it not so, honest Pierre?" demanded the Signor Grimaldi, adjusting himself in the saddle, as they got clear of the stones, sinuosities, projecting roofs, and filth of the village, into the more agreeable windings of the ordinary path again. "Our friend, the clavier, is apprised of the visit, and as we have already gone through fair and foul in company, I look to his fellowship for some compensation for the frugal meal of which we have just partaken."

"Father Xavier is a hospitable and happy-minded priest, signore; and that the saints will long leave him keeper of the convent-keys, is the prayer of every muleteer, guide, or pilgrim, who crosses the Col. I wish we were going up the rough steps by which we are to climb the last rock of the mountain, at this very moment, Messieurs, and that all the rest of the way were as fairly done as this we have so happily passed."

"Dost thou anticipate difficulty, friend?" demanded the Italian, leaning forward on his saddle-bow, for his quick observation had caught the examining glance that the guide threw around at the heavens.

"Difficulty is a meaning not easily admitted by a mountaineer, signore, and I am one of the last to think of it, or feel its dread. Still, we are near the end of the season, and these hills are high and bleak, and those that follow are delicate flowers for a stormy heath. Toil is always sweeter in the remembrance than in the expectation. I mean no more, if I mean that."

Pierre stopped his march as he ceased speaking. He stood on a little eminence of the path, whence, by looking back, he commanded a view of the opening among the

mountains which indicates the site of the valley of the Rhone. The look was long and understanding ; but, when it was ended, he turned and resumed his march with the business-like air of one more disposed to act than to speculate on the future. But for the few words which had just escaped him, this natural movement would have attracted no attention ; and, as it was, it was observed by none but the Signor Grimaldi, who would himself have attached little importance to the whole, had the guide maintained his usual pace.

As is common in the Alps, the conductor of the travellers went on foot, leading the whole party at such a gait as he thought most expedient for man and beast. Hitherto, Pierre had proceeded with sufficient leisure, rendering it necessary for those who followed to observe the same moderation ; but he now walked sensibly faster, and frequently so fast as to make it necessary for the mules to break into easy trots, in order to maintain their proper stations. All this, however, was ascribed by most of the party to the formation of the ground, for, after leaving Liddes, there is a long reach of what, among the upper valleys of the Alps, may by comparison be called a level road. This industry, too, was thought to be doubly necessary, in order to repair the time lost at the inn, for the sun was already dipping toward the western boundary of their narrow view of the heavens, and the temperature announced, if not a sudden change in the weather, at least the near approach of the periodical turn of the day.

“ We travel by a very ancient path,” observed the Signor Grimaldi, when his thoughts had reverted from their reflections on the movements of the guide to the circumstance of their present situation. “ A very reverend path, it might be termed, in compliment to the worthy monks who do so much to lessen its dangers, and to its great antiquity. History speaks often of its use by different leaders of armies, for it has long been a thoroughfare for those who journey between the north and the south, whether it be in strife or in amity. In the time of Augustus it was the route commonly used by the Roman legions in their passages to and from Helvetia and Gaul ; the followers of Cæcina went by these gorges to their attack upon Otho, and the Lombards made the same use of it, five hundred years later. It was often trod by armed bands, in the wars of Charles of Burgundy, those of Milan, and in

the conquests of Charlemagne. I remember a tale, in which it is said that a horde of infidel Corsairs from the Mediterranean penetrated by this road, and seized upon the bridge at St. Maurice with a view to plunder. As we are not the first, so it is probable we are not to be the last who have trusted themselves in these regions, bent on our objects, whether of love or of strife."

"Signore," observed Pierre, respectfully, when the Genoese ceased speaking, "if your *eccellenza* would make your discourse less learned, and more in those familiar words which can be said under a brisk movement, it might better suit the time and the great necessity there is to be diligent."

"Dost thou apprehend danger? Are we behind our time? Speak; for I dislike concealment."

"Danger has a strong meaning in the mouth of a mountaineer, *signore*; for what is security on this path, might be thought alarming lower down in the valleys; I say it not. But the sun is touching the rocks, as you see, and we are drawing near to places where a misstep of a mule in the dark might cost us dear. I would that all diligently improve the daylight while they can."

The Genoese did not answer, but he urged his mule again to a gait that was more in accordance with the wishes of Pierre. The movement was followed, as a matter of course, by the rest, and the whole party was once more in a gentle trot, which was scarcely sufficient, however, to keep even pace with the long, impatient, and rapid strides of Pierre, who, notwithstanding his years, appeared to get over the ground with a facility that cost him no effort. Hitherto the heat had not been small, and, in that pure atmosphere, all its powers were felt during the time the sun's rays fell into the valley; but, the instant they were intercepted by a brown and envious peak of the mountains, their genial influence was succeeded by a chill that sufficiently proved how necessary was the presence of the luminary to the comfort of those who dwelt at that great elevation. The females sought their mantles the moment the bright light was followed by the usual shadow; nor was it long before even the more aged of the gentlemen were seen unstrapping their cloaks, and taking the customary precautions against the effects of the evening air.

The reader is not to suppose, however, that all these little incidents of the way occurred in a time as brief as

that which has been consumed in the narration. A long line of path was travelled over, before the Signor Grimaldi and his friend were cloaked, and divers hamlets and cabins were successively passed. The alteration from the warmth of day to the chill of evening also was accompanied by a corresponding change in the appearance of the objects they passed. St. Pierre, a cluster of stone-roofed cottages, which bore all the characteristics of the inhospitable region for which they had been constructed, was the last village ; though there was a hamlet, at the bridge of Hudri, composed of a few dreary abodes, which, by their aspect, seemed the connecting link between the dwellings of men and the caverns of beasts. Vegetation had long been growing more and more meagre, and it was now fast melting away into still deeper and irretrievable traces of sterility, like the shadows of a picture passing through their several transitions of color to the depth of the background. The larches and cedars diminished gradually in size and numbers, until the straggling and stunted tree became a bush, and the latter finally disappeared in the shape of a tuft of pale green, that adhered to some crevice in the rocks like so much moss. Even the mountain grasses, for which Switzerland is so justly celebrated, grew thin and wiry ; and by the time the travellers reached the circular basin at the foot of the peak of Velan, which is called La Plaine de Prou, there only remained, in the most genial season of the year, and then in isolated spots between the rocks, a sufficiency of nourishment for the support of a small flock of adventurous, nibbling, and hungry goats.

The basin just alluded to is in an opening among high pinnacles, and is nearly surrounded by naked and rugged rocks. The path led through its centre, always ascending on an inclined plane, and disappeared through a narrow gorge around the brow of a beetling cliff. Pierre pointed out the latter as the pass by far the most dangerous on this side the Col, in the season of the melting snows, avalanches frequently rolling from its crags. There was no cause for apprehending this well-known Alpine danger, however, in the present moment ; for, with the exception of Mont-Velan, all above and around them lay the same dreary dress of sterility. Indeed, it would not be easy for the imagination to conceive a more eloquent picture of desolation than that which met the eyes of the travellers, as, following the course of the run of water that trickled through

the middle of the inhospitable valley, the certain indication of the general direction of their course, they reached its centre.

The time was getting to be that of early twilight, but the sombre color of the rocks, streaked and venerable by the ferruginous hue with which time had coated their sides, and the depth of the basin, gave to their situation a melancholy gloom passing the duskiness of the hour. On the other hand, the light rested bright and gloriously on the snowy peak of Velan, still many thousand feet above them, though in plain, and apparently near view; while rich touches of the setting sun were gleaming on several of the brown, natural battlements of the Alps, which, worn with eternal exposure to the storms, still lay in sublime confusion at a most painful elevation in their front. The azure vault that canopied all, had that look of distant glory and of grand repose, which so often meets the eyes, and so forcibly strikes the mind, of him who travels in the deep valleys and imbedded lakes of Switzerland. The glacier of Valsorey descended from the upper region nearly to the edge of the valley, bright and shining, its lower margin streaked and dirty with the *débris* of the overhanging rocks, as if doomed to the fate of all that came upon the earth, that of sharing its impurities.

There no longer existed any human habitation between the point which the travellers had now attained and the convent, though more modern speculation, in this age of curiosity and restlessness, has been induced to rear a substitute for an inn in the spot just described, with the hope of gleaning a scanty tribute from those who fail of arriving in season to share the hospitality of the monks. The chilliness of the air increased faster even than the natural change of the hour would seem to justify, and there were moments when the dull sound of the wind descended to their ears, though not a breath was stirring a withered and nearly solitary blade of grass at their feet. Once or twice, large black clouds drove across the opening above them, resembling heavy-winged vultures sailing in the void, preparatory to a swoop upon their prey.

CHAPTER XXII.

“ Through this gap
On and say nothing, lest a word, a breath,
Bring down a winter’s snow, enough to whelm
The armed files that, night and day, were seen
Winding from cliff to cliff in loose array,
To conquer at Marengo. —*Italy.*

PIERRE DUMONT halted in the middle of the sterile little plain, while he signed for those he conducted to continue their ascent. As each mule passed, it received a blow or a kick from the impatient guide, who did not seem to think it necessary to be very ceremonious with the poor beasts, and had taken this simple method to give a general and a brisker impulsion to the party. The expedient was so natural, and so much in accordance with the practice of the muleteers and others of their class, that it excited no suspicion in most of the travellers, who pursued their way, either meditating on and enjoying the novel and profound emotions that their present situation so naturally awakened, or discoursing lightly, in the manner of the thoughtless and unconcerned. The Signor Grimaldi alone, whose watchfulness had already been quickened by previous distrust, took heed of the movement. When all had passed, the Genoese turned in his saddle, and cast an apparently careless look behind. But the glance in truth was anxious and keen. Pierre stood looking steadily at the heavens, one hand holding his hat, and the other extended with an open palm. A glittering particle descended to the latter, when the guide instantly resumed his place in advance. As he passed the Italian, however, meeting an inquiring look, he permitted the other to see a snow-drop so thoroughly congealed, as to have not yet melted with the natural heat of his skin. The eye of Pierre appeared to impose discretion on his confidant, and the silent communion escaped the observation of the rest of the travellers. Just at this moment, too, the attention of the others was luckily called to a different object, by a cry from one of the muleteers, of whom there were three as assistants to the guide. He pointed out a party which, like themselves, was holding the direction of the Col. There was a solitary individual mounted on a mule, and a single pedestrian,

without any guide, or other traveller, in their company. Their movements were swift, and they had not been more than a minute in view, before they disappeared behind an angle of the crags which nearly closed the valley on the side of the convent, and which was the precise spot already mentioned as being so dangerous in the season of the melting snows.

"Dost thou know the quality and object of the travellers before us?" demanded the Baron de Willading, of Pierre.

The latter mused. It was evident he did not expect to meet with strangers in that particular part of the passage.

"We can know little of those who come from the convent, though few would be apt to leave so safe a roof at this late hour," he answered; "but, until I saw yonder travellers with my own eyes, I could have sworn there were none on this side of the Col going the same way as ourselves! It is time that all the others were already arrived."

"They are villagers of St. Pierre, going up with supplies," observed one of the muleteers. "None bound to Italy have passed Liddes since the party of Pippo, and they by this time should be well housed at the hospice. Didst not see a dog among them?—'twas one of the Augustines' mastiffs."

"'Twas the dog I noted, and it was on account of his appearance that I spoke," returned the Baron. "The animal had the air of an old acquaintance, Gaetano, for to me it seemed to resemble our tried friend Nettuno; and he at whose heels he kept so close wore much the air of our acquaintance of the Lemman, the bold and ready Maso."

"Who has gone unrequited for his eminent services!" answered the Genoese, thoughtfully. "The extraordinary refusal of that man to receive our money is quite as wonderful as any other part of his unusual and inexplicable conduct. I would he had been less obstinate or less proud, for the unrequited obligation rests like a load upon my spirits."

"Thou art wrong. I employed our young friend Sigismund secretly on this duty, while we were receiving the greetings of Roger de Blonay and the good bailiff, but thy countryman treated the escape lightly, as the mariner

is apt to consider past danger, and he would listen to no offer of protection or gold. I was, therefore, more displeased than surprised by what thou hast well enough termed obstinacy."

"‘Tell your employers,’ he said," added Sigismund, "‘that they may thank the saints, Our Lady, or Brother Luther, as best suits their habits, but that they had better forget that such a man as Maso lives. His acquaintance can bring them neither honor nor advantage. Tell this especially to the Signor Grimaldi, when you are on your journey to Italy, and we have parted forever, as on my suggestion.’ This was said to me in the interview I held with the brave fellow after his liberation from prison."

"The answer was remarkable for a man of his condition, and the especial message to myself of singular exception. I observed that his eye was often on me with peculiar meaning, during the passage of the lake, and to this hour I have not been able to explain the motive!"

"Is the Signore of Genoa?"—asked the guide: "or is he, by chance, in any way connected with her authorities!"

"Of that republic and city, and certainly of some little interest with the authorities," answered the Italian, a slight smile curling his lip, as he glanced a look at his friend.

"It is not necessary to look further for Maso's acquaintance with your features," returned Pierre, laughing; "for of all who live in Italy, there is not a man who has more frequent occasions to know the authorities; but we linger in this gossip. Urge the beasts upward, Etienne—presto! presto!"

The muleteers answered this appeal by one of their long cries, which has a resemblance to the rattling that is the well-known signal of the venomous serpent of this country, when he would admonish the traveller to move quickly, and which certainly produces the same startling effect on the nerves of the mule as the signal of the snake is very apt to excite in man. This interruption caused the dialogue to be dropped, all riding onward, musing in their several fashions on what had just passed. In a few minutes the party turned the crag in question, and, quitting the valley, or sterile basin, in which they had been journeying for the last half hour, they entered by a narrow gorge into a scene that resembled a crude collection of the materials of which the foundations of the world had been

originally formed. There was no longer any vegetation at all, or if here and there a blade of grass had put forth under the shelter of some stone, it was so meagre, and of so rare occurrence, as to be unnoticed in that sublime scene of chaotic confusion. Ferruginous, streaked, naked, and cheerless rocks arose around them, and even that snowy beacon, the glowing summit of Velan, which had so long lain bright and cheering on their path, was now hid entirely from view. Pierre Dumont soon after pointed out a place on the visible summit of the mountain, where a gorge between the neighboring peaks admitted a view of the heavens beyond. This he informed those he guided was the Col, through whose opening the pile of the Alps was to be finally surmounted. The light that still tranquilly reigned in this part of the heavens was in sublime contrast to the gathering gloom of the passes below, and all hailed this first glimpse of the end of their day's toil as a harbinger of rest, and we might add of security; for, although none but the Signor Grimaldi had detected the secret uneasiness of Pierre, it was not possible to be, at that late hour, amid so wild and dreary a display of desolation, and, as it were, cut off from communion with their kind, without experiencing an humbling sense of the dependence of man upon the grand and ceaseless Providence of God.

The mules were again urged to increase their pace, and images of the refreshment and repose that were expected from the convent's hospitality, became general and grateful among the travellers. The day was fast disappearing from the glens and ravines through which they rode, and all discourse ceased in the desire to get on. The exceeding purity of the atmosphere, which, at that great elevation, resembled a medium of thought rather than of matter, rendered objects defined, just, and clear; and none but the mountaineers and Sigismund, who were used to the deception (for in effect truth obtains this character with those who have been accustomed to the false), and who understood the grandeur of the scale on which nature has displayed her power among the Alps, knew how to calculate the distance which still separated them from their goal. More than a league of painful and stony ascent was to be surmounted, and yet Adelheid and Christine had both permitted slight exclamations of pleasure to escape them, when Pierre pointed to the speck of blue sky between the

hoary pinnacles above, and first gave them to understand that it denoted the position of the convent. Here and there, too, small patches of the last year's snow were discovered, lying under the shadows of overhanging rocks, and which were likely to resist the powers of the sun till winter came again; another certain sign that they had reached a height greatly exceeding that of the usual habitations of men. The keenness of the air was another proof of their situation, for all the travellers had heard that the Augustines dwelt among eternal frosts, a report which is nearly literally true.

At no time during the day had the industry of the party been as great as it now became. In this respect, the ordinary traveller is apt to resemble him who journeys on the great highway of life, and who finds himself obliged, by a tardy and ill-requited diligence in age, to repair those omissions and negligences of youth which would have rendered the end of his toil easy and profitable. Improved as their speed had become, it continued to increase rather than to diminish, for Pierre Dumont kept his eye riveted on the heavens, and each moment of time seemed to bring new incentives to exertion. The wearied beasts manifested less zeal than the guide, and they who rode them were beginning to murmur at the unreasonableness of the rate at which they were compelled to proceed on the narrow, uneven, stony path, where footing for the animals was not always obtained with the necessary quickness, when a gloom deeper than that cast by the shadows of the rocks fell upon their track, and the air filled with snow as suddenly as if all its particles had been formed and condensed by the application of some prompt chemical process.

The change was so unexpected, and yet so complete, that the whole party checked their mules, and sat looking up at the millions of flakes that were descending on their heads, with more wonder and admiration than fear. A shout from Pierre first aroused them from this trance, and recalled them to a sense of the real state of things. He was standing on a knoll, already separated from the party by some fifty yards, white with snow, and gesticulating violently for the travellers to come on.

"For the sake of the blessed Maria! quicken the beasts," he cried; for Pierre, like most who dwelt in Valais, was a Catholic, and one accustomed to bethink him most of

his heavenly mediator when most oppressed with present dangers ; "quicken their speed, if you value your lives ! This is no moment to gaze at the mountains, which are well enough in their way, and no doubt both the finest and largest known" (no Swiss ever seriously vituperates or loses his profound veneration for his beloved nature), "but which had better be the humblest plain on earth for our occasions than what they truly are. Quicken the mules, then, for the love of the Blessed Virgin !"

"Thou betrayest unnecessary, and, for one that had needs be cool, indiscreet alarm, at the appearance of a little snow, friend Pierre," observed the Signor Grimaldi, as the mules drew near the guide, and speaking with a little of the irony of a soldier who had steeled his nerves by familiarity with danger. "Even we Italians, though less used to the frosts than you of the mountains, are not so much disturbed by the change as thou, a trained guide of St. Bernard !"

"Reproach me as you will, signore," said Pierre, turning and pursuing his way with increased diligence, though he did not entirely succeed in concealing his resentment at an accusation which he knew to be unmerited, "but quicken your pace, until you are better acquainted with the country in which you journey—your words pass for empty breath in my ears. This is no trifle of a cloak doubled about the person, or of balls rolled into piles by the sport of children ; but an affair of life or death. You are a half league in the air, Signor Genoese, in the region of storms, where the winds work their will, at times, as if infernal devils were rioting to cool themselves, and where the stoutest limbs and the firmest hearts are brought but too often to see and confess their feebleness !"

The old man had uncovered his blanched locks in respect to the Italian, as he uttered this energetic remonstrance, and when he ended, he walked on in professional pride, as if disdaining to protect a brow that had already weathered so many tempests among the mountains.

"Cover thyself, good Pierre, I pray thee," urged the Genoese in a tone of repentance. "I have shown the intemperance of a boy, and intemperance of a quality that little becomes my years. Thou art the best judge of the circumstances in which we are placed, and thou alone shalt lead us."

Pierre accepted the apology with a manly but respect-

ful reverence, continuing always to ascend with unremitting industry.

Ten gloomy and anxious minutes succeeded. During this time, the falling snows came faster and faster and in finer flakes, while, occasionally, there were fearful intimations that the winds were about to rise. At the elevation in which the travellers now found themselves, phenomena, that would ordinarily be of little account, become the arbiters of fate. The escape of the caloric from the human system, at the height of six or seven thousand feet above the sea, and in the latitude of forty-six, is, under the most favorable circumstances, frequently of itself the source of inconvenience ; but here were grave additional reasons to heighten the danger. The absence of the sun's rays alone left a sense of chilling cold, and a few hours of night were certain to bring frost, even at midsummer. Thus it is that storms of trifling import in themselves, gain power over the human frame by its reduced means of resistance, and when to this fact is added the knowledge that the elements are far fiercer in their workings in the upper than in the nether regions of the earth, the motives of Pierre's concern will be better understood by the reader than they probably were by himself, though the honest guide had a long and severe experience to supply the place of theory.

Men are rarely loquacious in danger. The timid recoil into themselves, yielding most of their faculties to a tormenting imagination, that augments the causes of alarm and diminishes the means of security, while the firm of mind rally and condense their powers to the point necessary to exertion. Such were the effects in the present instance on those who followed Pierre. A general and deep silence pervaded the party, each one seeing their situation in the colors most suited to his particular habits and character. The men, without an exception, were grave and earnest in their efforts to force the mules forward ; Adelheid became pale, but she preserved her calmness by the sheer force of character ; Christine was trembling and dependent, though cheered by the presence of, and her confidence in Sigismund ; while the attendants of the heiress of Willading covered their heads, and followed their mistress with the blind faith in their superiors that is apt to sustain people of their class in serious emergencies.

Ten minutes sufficed entirely to change the aspect of the

view. The frozen element could not adhere to the iron-like and perpendicular faces of the mountains, but the glens, and ravines, and valleys became as white as the peak of Velan. Still Pierre continued his silent and upward march, in a way to keep alive a species of trembling hope among those who depended so helplessly upon his intelligence and faith. They wished to believe that the snow was merely one of those common occurrences that were to be expected on the summits of the Alps at this late season of the year, and which were no more than so many symptoms of the known rigor of the approaching winter. The guide himself was evidently disposed to lose no time in explanation, and as the secret excitement stole over all his followers he no longer had cause to complain of the tardiness of their movements. Sigismund kept near his sister and Adelheid, having a care that their mules did not lag, while the other males performed the same necessary office for the beasts ridden by the female domestics. In this manner passed the few sombre minutes which immediately preceded the disappearance of day. The heavens were no longer visible. In that direction the eye saw only an endless succession of falling flakes, and it was getting to be difficult to distinguish even the ramparts of rock that bounded the irregular ravine in which they rode. They were known to be, however, at no great distance from the path, which indeed occasionally brushed their sides. At other moments they crossed rude, stony, mountain heaths, if such a word can be applied to spots without the symbol or hope of vegetation. The traces of the beasts that had preceded them became less and less apparent, though the trickling stream that came down from the glaciers, and along which they had now journeyed for hours, was occasionally seen, as it was crossed in pursuing their winding way. Pierre, though still confident that he held the true direction, alone knew that this guide was not long to be relied on; for, as they drew nearer to the top of the mountains, the torrent gradually lessened both in its force and in the volume of its water, separating into twenty small rills, which came rippling from the vast bodies of snow that lay among the different peaks above.

As yet there had been no wind. The guide, as minute after minute passed without bringing any change in this respect, ventured at last to advert to the fact, cheering his companions by giving them reason to hope that they

should yet reach the convent without any serious calamity. As if in mockery of this opinion, the flakes of snow began to whirl in the air while the words were on his lips, and a blast came through the ravine, that set the protection of cloaks and mantles at defiance. Notwithstanding his resolution and experience, the stout-hearted Pierre suffered an exclamation of despair to escape him, and he instantly stopped, in the manner of a man who could no longer conceal the dread that had been collecting in his bosom for the last interminable and weary hour. Sigismund, as well as most of the men of the party, had dismounted a little previously, with a view to excite warmth by exercise. The youth had often traversed the mountains, and the cry no sooner reached his ear, than he was at the side of him who uttered it.

"At what distance are we still from the convent?" he demanded eagerly.

"There is more than a league of steep and stony path to mount, Monsieur le Capitaine," returned the disconsolate Pierre, in a tone that perhaps said more than his words.

"This is not a moment for indecision. Remember that thou art not the leader of a party of carriers with their beasts of burden, but that there are those with us who are unused to exposure, and are feeble of body. What is the distance from the last hamlet we passed?"

"Double that to the convent!"

Sigismund turned, and with the eye he made a silent appeal to the two old nobles, as if to ask for advice or orders.

"It might indeed be better to return," observed the Signor Grimaldi, in the way one utters a half-formed resolution. "This wind is getting to be piercingly cutting, and the night is hard upon us. What thinkest thou, Melchior; for, with Monsieur Sigismund, I am of opinion that there is little time to lose."

"Signore, your pardon," hastily interrupted the guide. "I would not undertake to cross the plain of the Velan, an hour later, for all the treasures of Einsiedeln and Loretto! The wind will have an infernal sweep in that basin, which will soon be boiling like a pot, while here we shall get, from time to time, the shelter of the rocks. The slightest mishap on the open ground might lead us astray

a league or more, and it would need an hour to regain the course. The beasts too mount faster than they descend, and with far more surety in the dark ; and even when at the village there is nothing fit for nobles, while the brave monks have all that a king can need."

"Those who escape from these wild rocks need not be critical about their fare, honest Pierre, when fairly housed. Wilt thou answer for our arrival at the convent unharmed, and in reasonable time?"

"Signore, we are in the hands of God. The pious Augustines, I make no doubt, are praying for all who are on the mountain at this moment ; but there is not a minute to lose. I ask no more than that none lose sight of their companions, and that each exert his force to the utmost. We are not far from the House of Refuge, and should the storm increase to a tempest, as, to conceal the danger no longer, well may happen in this late month, we will seek its shelter for a few hours."

This intelligence was happily communicated, for the certainty that there was a place of safety within an attainable distance, had some such cheering effect on the travellers as is produced on the mariner who finds that the hazards of the gale are lessened by the accidental position of a secure harbor under his lee. Repeating his admonitions for the party to keep as close together as possible, and advising all who felt the sinister effects of the cold on their limbs to dismount, and to endeavor to restore the circulation by exercise, Pierre resumed his route.

But even the time consumed in this short conference had sensibly altered the condition of things for the worse. The wind, which had no fixed direction, being a furious current of the upper air diverted from its true course by encountering the ragged peaks and ravines of the Alps, was now whirling around them in eddies, now aiding their ascent by seeming to push against their backs, and then returning in their faces with a violence that actually rendered advance impossible. The temperature fell rapidly several degrees, and the most vigorous of the party began to perceive the benumbing influence of the chilling currents, at their lower extremities especially, in a manner to excite serious alarm. Every precaution was used to protect the females that tenderness could suggest ; but though Adelheid, who alone retained sufficient self-command to give an account of their feelings, diminished the danger of

their situation with the wish not to alarm any of their companions uselessly, she could not conceal from herself the horrible truth that the vital heat was escaping from her own body with a rapidity that rendered it impossible for her much longer to retain the use of her faculties. Conscious of her own mental superiority over that of all her female companions, a superiority which in such moments is even of more account than bodily force, after a few minutes of silent endurance, she checked her mule, and called upon Sigismund to examine the condition of his sister and her maids, neither of whom had now spoken for some time.

This startling request was made at a moment when the storm appeared to gather new force, and when it had become absolutely impossible to distinguish even the whitened earth at twenty paces from the spot where the party stood collected in a shivering group. The young soldier threw open the cloaks and mantles in which Christine was enveloped, and the half unconscious girl sank on his shoulder, like a drowsy infant that was willing to seek its slumbers in the arms of one it loved.

"Christine!—my sister, my poor, my much-abused, angelic sister!" murmured Sigismund, happily for his secret in a voice that only reached the ears of Adelheid. "Awake! Christine! for the love of our excellent and affectionate mother, exert thyself. Awake, Christine! in the name of God, awake!"

"Awake, dearest Christine!" exclaimed Adelheid, throwing herself from the saddle, and folding the smiling but benumbed girl to her bosom. "God protect me from the pang of feeling that thy loss should be owing to my wish to lead thee amid these cruel and inhospitable rocks! Christine, if thou hast love or pity for me, awake!"

"Look to the maids!" hurriedly said Pierre, who found that he was fast touching on one of those mountain catastrophes, of which, in the course of his life, he had been the witness of a few of fearful consequences. "Look to all the females, for he who now sleeps, dies!"

The muleteers soon stripped the two domestics of their outer coverings, and it was immediately proclaimed that both were in imminent danger, one having already lost all consciousness. A timely application of the flask of Pierre, and the efforts of the muleteers, succeeded in so far restoring life as to remove the grounds of immediate apprehension;

though it was apparent to the least instructed of them all, that half an hour more of exposure would probably complete the fatal work that had so actively and vigorously commenced. To add to the horror of his conviction, each member of the party, not excepting the muleteers, was painfully conscious of the escape of that vital warmth whose total flight was death.

In this strait all dismounted. They felt that the occasion was one of extreme jeopardy, that nothing could save them but resolution, and that every minute of time was getting to be of the last importance. Each female, Adelheid included, was placed between two of the other sex, and, supported in this manner, Pierre called loudly and in a manful voice for the whole to proceed. The beasts were driven after them by one of the muleteers. The progress of travellers, feeble as Adelheid and her companions, on a stony path of very uneven surface, and of a steep ascent, the snow covering the feet, and the tempest cutting their faces, was necessarily slow, and to the last degree toilsome. Still, the exertions increased the quickness of the blood, and, for a short time, there was an appearance of recalling those who most suffered to life. Pierre, who still kept his post with the hardihood of a mountaineer and the fidelity of a Swiss, cheered them on with his voice, continuing to raise the hope that the place of refuge was at hand.

At this instant, when exertion was most needed, and when, apparently, all were sensible of its importance and most disposed to make it, the muleteer charged with the duty of urging on the line of beasts deserted his trust, preferring to take his chance of regaining the village by descending the mountain, to struggle uselessly, and at a pace so slow, to reach the convent. The man was a stranger in the country, who had been adventitiously employed for this expedition, and was unconnected with Pierre, by any of those ties which are the best pledges of unconquerable faith, when the interests of self press hard upon our weaknesses. The wearied beasts, no longer driven, and indisposed to toil, first stopped, then turned aside to avoid the cutting air and the ascent, and were soon wandering from the path it was so vitally necessary to keep.

As soon as Pierre was informed of the circumstances, he eagerly issued an order to collect the stragglers without delay, and at every hazard. Benumbed, bewildered, and unable to see beyond a few yards, this embarrassing duty

was not easily performed. One after another of the party joined in the pursuit, for all the effects of the travellers were on the beasts ; and after some ten minutes of delay, blended with an excitement which helped to quicken the blood and awaken the faculties of even the females, the mules were all happily regained. They were secured to each other head and tail, in the manner so usual in the droves of these animals, and Pierre turned to resume the order of the march. But on seeking the path, it was not to be found ! Search was made on every side, and yet none could meet with the smallest of its traces. Broken, rough fragments of rock, were all that rewarded the most anxious investigation ; and after a few precious minutes uselessly wasted, they all assembled around the guide, as if by common consent, to seek his counsel. The truth was no longer to be concealed—the party was lost.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“ Let no presuming railer tax
Creative wisdom, as if aught was formed
In vain, or not for admirable ends.”—THOMSON.

So long as we possess the power to struggle, hope is the last feeling to desert the human mind. Men are endowed with every gradation of courage, from the calm energy of reflection, which is rendered still more effective by physical firmness, to the headlong precipitation of reckless spirit ; from the resolution that grows more imposing and more respectable, as there is greater occasion for its exercise, to the fearful and ill-directed energies of despair. But no description with the pen can give the reader a just idea of the chill that comes over the heart when accidental causes rob us, suddenly and without notice, of those resources on which we have been habitually accustomed to rely. The mariner, without his course or compass, loses his audacity and coolness, though the momentary danger be the same ; the soldier will fly, if you deprive him of his arms ; and the hunter of our own forests who has lost his own landmarks, is transformed from the bold and determined foe of its tenants, into an anxious and dependent fugitive, timidly seeking the means of retreat. In short,

the customary associations of the mind being rudely and suddenly destroyed, we are made to feel that reason, while it elevates us so far above the brutes to make man their lord and governor, becomes a quality less valuable than instinct, when the connecting link in its train of causes and effects is severed.

It was no more than a natural consequence of his greater experience, that Pierre Dumont understood the horrors of their present situation far better than any with him. It is true, there yet remained enough light to enable him to pick his way over the rocks and stones, but he had sufficient experience to understand that there was less risk in remaining stationary than in moving; for, while there was only one direction that led toward the Refuge, all the rest would conduct them to a greater distance from the shelter, which was now the only hope. On the other hand, a very few minutes of the intense cold, and of the searching wind to which they were exposed, would most probably freeze the currents of life in the feeblest of those intrusted to his care.

"Hast thou aught to advise?" asked Melchior de Wilading, folding Adelheid to his bosom beneath his ample cloak, and communicating, with a father's love, a small portion of the meagre warmth that still remained in his own aged frame to that of his drooping daughter—"canst thou bethink thee of nothing that may be done in this awful strait?"

"If the good monks have been active——" returned the wavering Pierre. "I fear me that the dogs have not yet been exercised on the paths this season!"

"Has it then come to this! Are our lives indeed dependent on the uncertain sagacity of brutes!"

"Mein Herr, I would bless the Virgin and her holy Son, if it were so! But I fear this storm has been so sudden and unexpected, that we may not even hope for their succor."

Melchior groaned. He folded his child still nearer to his heart, while the athletic Sigismund shielded his drooping sister, as the fowl shelters its young beneath the wing.

"Delay is death," rejoined the Signor Grimaldi. "I have heard of muleteers that have been driven to kill their beasts, that shelter and warmth might be found in their entrails."

"The alternative is horrible!" interrupted Sigismund. "Is return impossible? By always descending, we must, in time, reach the village below."

"That time would be fatal," answered Pierre. "I know of only one resource that remains. If the party will keep together, and answer my shouts, I will make another effort to find the path."

This proposal was gladly accepted, for energy and hope go hand in hand, and the guide was about to quit the group, when he felt the strong grasp of Sigismund on his arm.

"I will be thy companion," said the soldier firmly.

"Thou hast not done me justice, young man," answered Pierre, with severe reproach in his manner. "Had I been base enough to desert my trust, these limbs and this strength are yet sufficient to carry me safely down the mountain; but though a guide of the Alps may freeze like another man, the last throb of his heart will be in behalf of those he serves."

"A thousand pardons, brave old man—a thousand pardons! still will I be thy companion. The search that is conducted by two will be more likely to succeed than that on which thou goest alone."

The offended Pierre, who liked the spirit of the youth as much as he disliked his previous suspicions, met the apology frankly. He extended his hand and forgot the feelings that, even amid the tempests of those wild mountains, were excited by a distrust of his honesty. After this short concession to the ever-burning though smothered volcano of human passion they left the group together, in order to make a last search for their course.

The snow by this time was many inches deep, and as the road was at best but a faint bridle-path that could scarcely be distinguished by day-light from the débris which strewn the ravines, the undertaking would have been utterly hopeless, had not Pierre known that there was the chance of still meeting with some signs of the many mules that daily went up and down the mountain. The guide called to the muleteers, who answered his cries every minute; for so long as they kept within the sound of each other's voices, there was no danger of their becoming entirely separated. But, amid the hollow roaring of the wind, and the incessant pelting of the storm, it was neither safe nor practicable to venture far asunder. Several little stony knolls were

ascended and descended, and a rippling rill was found, but without bringing with it any traces of the path. The heart of Pierre began to chill with the decreasing warmth of his body, and the firm old man, overwhelmed with his responsibility, while his truant thoughts would unbidden recur to those whom he had left in his cottage at the foot of the mountain, gave way at last to his emotions in a paroxysm of grief, wringing his hands, weeping and calling loudly on God for succor. This fearful evidence of their extremity worked upon the feelings of Sigismund until they were wrought up nearly to frenzy. His great physical force still sustained him, and in an excess of energy that was fearfully allied to madness he rushed forward into the vortex of snow and hail, as if determined to leave all to the Providence of God, disappearing from the eyes of his companion. This incident recalled the guide to his senses. He called earnestly on the thoughtless youth to return. No answer was given, and Pierre hastened back to the motionless and shivering party, in order to unite all their voices in a last effort to be heard. Cry upon cry was raised, but each shout was answered merely by the hoarse rushing of the winds.

"Sigismund! Sigismund!" called one after another in hurried and alarmed succession.

"The noble boy will be irretrievably lost!" exclaimed the Signor Grimaldi in despair, the services already rendered by the youth, together with his manly qualities, having insensibly and closely wound themselves around his heart. "He will die a miserable death, and without the consolation of meeting his fate in communion with his fellow-sufferers!"

A shout from Sigismund came whirling past, as if the sound were embodied in the gale.

"Blessed Ruler of the Earth, this is alone thy mercy!" exclaimed Melchior de Willading—"he has found the path!"

"And honor to thee, Maria—thou mother of God!" murmured the Italian.

At that moment a dog came leaping and barking through the snow. It immediately was scenting and whining among the frozen travellers. The exclamations of joy and surprise were scarcely uttered before Sigismund, accompanied by another, joined the party.

"Honor and thanks to the good Augustines!" cried the

delighted guide ; "this is the third good office of the kind for which I am their debtor !"

"I would it were true, honest Pierre," answered the stranger. "But Maso and Nettuno are poor substitutes in a tempest like this, for the servants and beasts of St. Bernard. I am a wanderer, and lost like yourselves, and my presence brings little other relief than that which is known to be the fruit of companionship in misery. The saints have brought me a second time into your company when matters were hanging between life and death !"

Maso made this last remark when, by drawing nearer the group, he had been able to ascertain, by the remains of the light, of whom the party was composed.

"If it is to be as useful now as thou hast already been," answered the Genoese, "it will be happier for us all, thyself included. Bethink thee quickly of thy expedients, and I will make thee an equal sharer of all that a generous Providence hath bestowed."

Il Maledetto rarely listened to the voice of the Signor Grimaldi without a manner of interest and curiosity which, as already mentioned, had more than once struck the latter himself, but which he quite naturally attributed to the circumstance of his person being known to one who had declared himself to be a native of Genoa. Even at this terrible moment, the same manner was evident, and the noble, thinking it a favorable symptom, renewed the already neglected offer of fortune, with a view to quicken the zeal which he reasonably enough supposed would be most likely to be awakened by the hopes of a substantial reward.

"Were there question here, illustrious Signore," answered Maso, "of steering a barge, of shortening sail, or of handling a craft of any rig or construction, in gale, squall, hurricane, or a calm among breakers, my skill and experience might be turned to good account ; but setting aside the difference in our strength and hardihood, even that lily which is in so much danger of being nipped by the frosts is not more helpless than I am myself at this moment. I am no better than yourselves, signori, and, though a better mountaineer, perhaps, I rely on the favor of the saints to be succored, or my time must finish among the snows instead of in the surf of a seashore, as, until now, I had always believed would be my fate."

"But the dog—thy admirable dog ?"

"Ah, Eccellenza, Nettuno is but a useless beast, here! God has given him a thicker mantle, and a warmer dress than to us Christians, but even this advantage will soon prove a curse to my poor friend. The long hair he carries will quickly be covered with icicles, and, as the snow deepens, it will retard his movements. The dogs of St. Bernard are smoother, have longer limbs, and a truer scent, and possess the advantage of being trained to the paths."

A tremendous shout of Sigismund's interrupted Maso; the youth, on finding that the accidental meeting with the mariner was not likely to lead to any immediate advantages, having instantly, accompanied by Pierre and one of his assistants, renewed the search. The cry was echoed from the guide and the muleteer, and then all three were seen flying through the snow, preceded by a powerful mastiff. Nettuno, who had been crouching with his bushy tail between his legs, barked, seemed to arouse with new courage, and then leaped with evident joy and good-will upon the back of his old antagonist Uberto.

The dog of St. Bernard was alone. But his air and all his actions were those of an animal whose consciousness was wrought up to the highest pitch permitted by the limits nature had set to the intelligence of a brute. He ran from one to another, rubbed his glossy and solid side against the limbs of all, wagged his tail, and betrayed the usual signs that creatures of his species manifest, when their instinct is most alive. Luckily he had a good interpreter of his meaning in the guide, who, knowing the habits, and, if it may be so expressed, the intentions of the mastiff, feeling there was not a moment to lose if they would still preserve the feebler members of their party, begged the others to hasten the necessary dispositions to profit by this happy meeting. The females were supported as before, the mules fastened together, and Pierre, placing himself in front, called cheerfully to the dog, encouraging him to lead the way.

"Is it quite prudent to confide so implicitly to the guidance of this brute?" asked the Signor Grimaldi, a little doubtingly, when he saw the arrangement on which, by the increasing gloom and the growing intensity of the cold, it was but too apparent, even to one as little accustomed to the mountains as himself, that the lives of the whole party depended.

"Fear not to trust to old Uberto, signore," answered Pierre, moving onward as he spoke, for to think of further delay was out of the question; "fear nothing for the faith or the knowledge of the dog. These animals are trained by the servants of the convent to know and keep the paths, even when the snows lie on them fathoms deep. God has given them stout hearts, long limbs, and short hair, expressly, as it has often seemed to me, for this end; and nobly do they use the gifts! I am acquainted with all their ways, for we guides commonly learn the ravines of St. Bernard by first serving the clapiers of the convent, and many a day have I gone up and down these rocks with a couple of these animals in training for this very purpose. The father and mother of Uberto were my favorite companions, and their son will hardly play an old friend of the family false."

The travellers followed their leader with more confidence, though blindly. Uberto appeared to perform his duty with the sobriety and steadiness that became his years, and which, indeed, were very necessary for the circumstances in which they were placed. Instead of bounding ahead and becoming lost to view, as most probably would have happened with a younger animal, the noble and half-reasoning brute maintained a pace that was suited to the slow march of those who supported the females, occasionally stopping to look back, as if to make sure that none were left.

The dogs of St. Bernard are, or it might perhaps be better to say were,—for it is affirmed that the ancient race is lost,—chosen for their size, their limbs, and the shortness of their coats, as has just been stated by Pierre; the former being necessary to convey the succor with which they were often charged, as well as to overcome the difficulties of the mountains, and the two latter that they might the better wade through, and resist the influence of, the snows. Their training consisted in rendering them familiar with, and attached to, the human race; in teaching them to know and to keep the paths on all occasions, except such as called for a higher exercise of their instinct, and to discover the position of those who had been overwhelmed by the avalanches, and to assist in disinterring their bodies. In all these duties Uberto had been so long exercised, that he was universally known to be the most sagacious and the most trusty animal on the mountain. Pierre

followed his steps with so much greater reliance on his intelligence, from being perfectly acquainted with the character of the dog. When, therefore, he saw the mastiff turn at right angles to the course he had just been taking, the guide, on reaching the spot, imitated his example, and first removing the snow to make sure of the fact, he joyfully proclaimed to those who came after him that the lost path was found. This intelligence sounded like a reprieve from death, though the mountaineers well knew that more than an hour of painful and increasing toil was still necessary to reach the hospice. The chilled blood of the tender beings who were fast dropping into the terrible sleep which is the forerunner of death, was quickened in their veins, however, when they heard the shout of delight that spontaneously broke from all their male companions, on learning the glad tidings.

The movement was now faster, though embarrassed and difficult on account of the incessant pelting of the storm and the influence of the biting cold, which were difficult to be withstood by even the strongest of the party. Sigismund groaned inwardly, as he thought of Adelheid and his sister's being exposed to a tempest which shook the stoutest frame and the most manly heart among them. He encircled the latter with an arm, rather carrying than leading her along, for the young soldier had sufficient knowledge of the localities of the mountain to understand that they were still at a fearful distance from the Col and that the strength of Christine was absolutely unequal to the task of reaching it unsupported.

Occasionally Pierre spoke to the dogs, Nettuno keeping close to the side of Uberto in order to prevent separation, since the path was no longer discernible without constant examination, the darkness having so far increased as to reduce the sight to very narrow limits. Each time the name of the latter was pronounced, the animal would stop, wag his tail or give some other sign of recognition, as if to reassure his followers of his intelligence and fidelity. After one of these short halts, old Uberto and his companion unexpectedly refused to proceed. The guide, the two old nobles, and at length the whole party, were around them, and no cry or encouragement of the mountaineers could induce the dogs to quit their tracks.

"Are we again lost?" asked the Baron de Willading, pressing Adelheid closer to his beating heart, nearly ready

to submit to their common fate in despair. "Has God at length forsaken us?—my daughter—my beloved child!"

This touching appeal was answered by a howl from Uberto, who leaped madly away and disappeared. Nettuno followed, barking wildly and with a deep throat. Pierre did not hesitate about following, and Sigismund, believing that the movement of the guide was to arrest the flight of the dogs, was quickly on his heels. Maso moved with greater deliberation.

"Nettuno is not apt to raise that bark with nothing but hail, and snow, and wind in his nostrils," said the calculating Italian. "We are either near another party of travellers, for such are on the mountains as I know——"

"God forbid! Art sure of this?" demanded the Signor Grimaldi, observing that the other had suddenly checked himself.

"Sure that others *were*, signore," returned the mariner deliberately, as if he measured well the meaning of each word. "Ah, here comes the trusty beast, and Pierre, and the captain, with their tidings, be they good or be they evil."

The two just named rejoined their friends as Maso ceased speaking. They hurriedly informed the shivering travellers that the much-desired Refuge was near, and that nothing but the darkness and the driving snow prevented it from being seen.

"It was a blessed thought, and one that came from St. Augustine himself, which led the holy monks to raise this shelter!" exclaimed the delighted Pierre, no longer considering it necessary to conceal the extent of the danger they had run. "I would not answer even for my own power to reach the hospice in a time like this. You are of Mother Church, signore, being of Italy?"

"I am one of her unworthy children," returned the Genoese.

"This unmerited favor must have come from the prayers of St. Augustine, and a vow I made to send a fair offering to our Lady of Einsiedeln; for never before have I known a dog of St. Bernard lead the traveller to the Refuge! Their business is to find the frozen, and to guide the traveller along the paths to the hospice. Even Uberto had his doubts, as you saw, but the vow prevailed; or, I know not—it might, indeed, have been the prayer."

The Signor Grimaldi was too eager to get Adelheid

under cover, and, in good sooth, to be there himself, to waste the time in discussing the knotty point of which of two means, that were equally orthodox, had been the most efficacious in bringing about their rescue. In common with the others, he followed the pious and confiding Pierre in silence, making the best of his way after the credulous guide. The latter had not yet seen the Refuge himself, for so these places are well termed on the Alpine passes, but the formation of the ground had satisfied him of its proximity. Once reassured as to his precise position, all the surrounding localities presented themselves to his mind with the familiarity the seaman manifests with every cord in the intricate maze of his rigging, and in the darkest night, or, to produce a parallel of more common use, with the readiness which all manifest in the intricacies of their own habitations. The broken chain of association being repaired and joined, everything became clear again to his apprehension, and, in diverging from the path on this occasion, the old man held his way as directly toward the spot he sought, as if he were journeying under a bright sun. There was a rough but short descent, a similar rise, and the long-desired goal was reached.

We shall not stop to dwell upon the emotions with which the travellers first touched this place of comparative security. Humility, and dependence on the providence of God, were the predominant sensations even with the rude muleteers, while the nearly exhausted females were just able to express in murmurs their fervent gratitude to the omnipotent power that had permitted its agents so unexpectedly to interpose between them and death. The Refuge was not seen until Pierre laid his hand on the roof, now white with snow, and proclaimed its character with a loud, warm, and devout thanksgiving.

"Enter, and thank God!" he said. "Another hopeless half hour would have brought down from his pride the stoutest among us—enter, and thank God!"

As is the fact with all the edifices of that region, the building was entirely of stone, even to the roof, having the form of those vaulted cellars which in this country are used for the preservation of vegetables. It was quite free from humidity, however, the clearness of the atmosphere and the entire absence of soil preventing the accumulation of moisture, and it offered no more than the naked protection of its walls to those who sought its cover. But shelter on such

a night was everything, and this it effectually afforded. The place had only one outlet, being simply formed of four walls and the roof ; but it was sufficiently large to shelter a party twice as numerous as that which had now reached it.

The transition from the biting cold and piercing winds of the mountain to the shelter of this inartificial building, was so great as to produce something like a general sensation of warmth. The advantage gained in this change of feeling was judiciously improved by the application of friction and of restoratives under the direction of Pierre. Uberto carried a small supply of the latter attached to his collar, and before half an hour had passed, Adelheid and Christine were sleeping sweetly, side by side, muffled in plenty of spare garments, and pillowed on the saddles and housings of the mules. The brutes were brought within the Refuge, and as no party mounted the St. Bernard without carrying the provender necessary for its beasts of burden, that sterile region affording none of its own, the very fuel being transported leagues on the backs of mules, the patient and hardy animals, too, found their solace, after the fatigues and exposure of the day. The presence of so many living bodies in lodgings so confined aided in producing warmth, and, after all had eaten of the scanty fare furnished by the foresight of the guide, drowsiness came over the whole party.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“ Side by side,
Within they lie, a mournful company.”—ROGERS.

THE sleep of the weary is sweet. In after-life, Adelheid, when dwelling in a palace, reposing on down, and canopied by the rich stuffs of a more generous climate, was often heard to say that she had never taken rest grateful as that she found in the Refuge of St. Bernard. So easy, natural, and refreshing had been her slumbers, unalloyed even by those dreams of prejudices and avalanches which long afterward haunted her slumbers, that she was the first to open her eyes on the following morning, awakening like an infant that had enjoyed a quiet and healthful re-

pose. Her movements aroused Christine. They threw aside the cloaks and coats that covered them, and sat gazing about the place in the confusion that the novelty of their situation would be likely to produce. All the rest of the travellers still slumbered ; and, arising without noise, they passed the silent and insensible sleepers, the quiet mules which had stretched themselves near the entrance of the place, and quitted the hut.

Without, the scene was wintry ; but, as is usual in the Alps, let what may be the season, its features of grand and imposing sublimity were prominent. The day was among the peaks above them, while the shades of night still lay upon the valleys, forming a landscape like that exquisite and poetical picture of the lower world, which Guido has given in the celebrated al-fresco painting of Aurora. The ravines and glens were covered with snow, but the sides of the rugged rocks were bare in their eternal hue of ferruginous brown. The little knoll on which the Refuge stood was also nearly naked, the wind having driven the light particles of the snow into the ravine of the path. The air of the morning is keen at that great height even in midsummer, and the shivering girls drew their mantles about them, though they breathed the clear, elastic, inspiring element with pleasure. The storm was entirely past, and the pure sapphire-colored sky was in lovely contrast with the shadows beneath, raising their thoughts naturally to that heaven which shone in a peace and glory so much in harmony with the ordinary images we shadow forth of the abode of the blessed. Adelheid pressed the hand of Christine, and they knelt together, bowing their heads to a rock. As fervent, pure, and sincere orisons ascended to God, from these pious and innocent spirits, as it belongs to poor mortality to offer.

This general, and in their peculiar situation especial, duty performed, the gentle girls felt more assured. Relieved of a heavy and imperative obligation, they ventured to look about them with greater confidence. Another building, similar in form and material to that in which their companions were still sleeping, stood on the same swell of rock, and their first inquiries naturally took that direction. The entrance, or outlet to this hut, was an orifice that resembled a window rather than a door. They moved cautiously to the spot, looking into the gloomy,

cavern-like room, as timidly as the hare throws his regards about him before he ventures from his cover. Four human forms were reposing deep in the vault, with their backs sustained against the walls. They slept profoundly, too, for the curious but startled girls gazed at them long, and retired without causing them to awake.

"We have not been alone on the mountain in this terrible night," whispered Adelheid, gently urging the trembling Christine away from the spot; "thou seest that other travellers have been taking their rest near us; most probably after perils and fatigues like our own."

Christine drew closer to the side of her more experienced friend, like the young of the dove hovering near the mother-bird when first venturing from the nest, and they returned to the refuge they had quitted, for the cold was still so intense as to render its protection grateful. At the door they were met by Pierre, the vigilant old man having awakened as soon as the light crossed his eyes.

"We are not alone here," said Adelheid, pointing to the other stone-covered roof—"there are travellers sleeping in yonder building, too."

"Their sleep will be long, lady," answered the guide, shaking his head solemnly. "With two of them it has already lasted a twelvemonth, and the third has slept where you saw him since the fall of the avalanche in the last days of April."

Adelheid recoiled a step, for his meaning was too plain to be misunderstood. After looking at her gentle companion, she demanded if those they had seen were in truth the bodies of travellers who had perished on the mountain.

"Of no other, lady," returned Pierre. "This hut is for the living—that for the dead. So near are the two to each other, when men journey on these wild rocks in winter. I have known him who passed a short and troubled night here, begin a sleep in the other before the turn of the day that is not only deep enough, but which will last forever. One of the three that thou hast just seen was a guide like myself; he was buried in the falling snow at the spot where the path leaves the plain of Velan below us. Another is a pilgrim that perished in as clear a night as ever shone on St. Bernard, and merely for having taken a cup too much to cheer his way. The third is a poor vine-dresser that was coming from Piedmont into our

Swiss valleys to follow his calling, when death overtook him in an ill-advised slumber, in which he was so unwise as to indulge at nightfall. I found his body myself on that naked rock, the day after we had drunk together in friendship at Aoste, and with my own hands was he placed among the others."

"And such is the burial a Christian gets in this inhospitable country!"

"What would you, lady!—'tis the chance of the poor and the unknown. Those that have friends are sought and found; but those that die without leaving traces of their origin fare as you see. The spade is useless among these rocks; and then it is better that the body should remain where it may be seen and claimed, than that it should be put out of sight. The good fathers, and all of note, are taken down into the valleys, where there is earth, and are decently buried; while the poor and the stranger are housed in this vault, which is a better cover than many of them knew while living. Aye, there are three Christians there, who were all lately walking the earth in the flesh, gay and active as any."

"The bodies are four in number!"

Pierre looked surprised; he mused a little, and continued his employment.

"Then another has perished. The time may come when my own blood shall freeze. This is a fate the guide must ever keep in mind, for he is exposed to it at an hour and a season that he knows not!"

Adelheid pursued the subject no further. She remembered to have heard that the pure atmosphere of the mountain prevented that offensive decay which is usually associated with the idea of death, and the usage lost some of its horror in the recollection.

In the meantime the remainder of the party awoke, and were collecting before the Refuge. The mules were led forth and saddled, the baggage was loaded, and Pierre was calling upon the travellers to mount, when Uberto and Nettuno came leaping down the path in company, running side by side in excellent fellowship. The movements of the dogs were of a nature to attract the attention of Pierre and the muleteers, who predicted that they should soon see some of the servants of the Hospice. The result showed the familiarity of the guide with his duty, for he had scarce ventured this opinion, when a party from

the gorge on the summit of the mountain was seen wading through the snow, along the path that led toward the Refuge, with Father Xavier at its head.

The explanations were brief and natural. After conducting the travellers to the shelter, and passing most of the night in their company, at the approach of dawn Uberto had returned to the convent, always attended by his friend Nettuno. Here he communicated to the monks, by signs which they who were accustomed to the habits of the animal were not slow in interpreting, that travellers were on the mountain. The good clavier knew that the party of the Baron de Willading was about to cross the Col, for he had hurried home to be in readiness to receive them; and foreseeing the probability that they had been overtaken by the storm of the previous night, he was foremost in joining the servants who went forth to their succor. The little flask of cordial, too, had been removed from the collar of Uberto, leaving no doubt of its contents having been used; and, as nothing was more probable than that the travellers should seek a cover, their steps were directed toward the Refuge as a matter of course.

The worthy clavier made this explanation with eyes that glistened with moisture, occasionally interrupting himself to murmur a prayer of thanksgiving. He passed from one of the party to the other, not even neglecting the muleteers, examining their limbs, and more especially their ears, to see that they had quite escaped the influence of the frost, and was only happy when assured by his own observation that the terrible danger they had run was not likely to be attended by any injurious consequences.

"We are accustomed to see many accidents of this nature," he said, smilingly, when the examination was satisfactorily ended, "and practice has made us quick of sight in these matters. The blessed Maria be praised, and adoration to her holy Son, that you have all got through the night so well! There is a warm breakfast in readiness in the convent kitchen, and, one solemn duty performed, we will go up the rocks to enjoy it. The little building near us is the last earthly abode of those who perish on this side the mountain, and whose remains are unclaimed. None of our canons pass the spot without offering a prayer in behalf of their souls. Kneel with me, then, you that have so much reason to be grateful to God, and join in the petition"

Father Xavier knelt on the rocks, and all the Catholics of the party united with him in the prayer for the dead. The Baron de Willading, his daughter and their attendants stood uncovered the while, for though their Protestant opinions rejected such a mediation as useless, they deeply felt the solemnity and holy character of the sacrifice. The clavier arose with a countenance that was beaming and bright as the morning sun, which just at that moment appeared above the summits of the Alps, casting its genial and bland warmth on the group, the brown huts, and the mountain-side.

"Thou art a heretic," he said affectionately to Adelheid, in whom he felt the interest, to which her youth and beauty, and the great danger they had so lately run in company, very naturally gave birth. "Thou art an impenitent heretic, but we will not cast thee off; notwithstanding thy obstinacy and crimes, thou seest that the saints can interest themselves in the behalf of obstinate sinners, or thou and all with thee would have surely been lost."

This was said in a way to draw a smile from Adelheid, who received his accusations as so many friendly and playful reproaches. As a token of peace between them, she offered her hand to the monk, with a request that he would aid her in getting into the saddle.

"Dost thou remark the brutes!" said the Signor Grimaldi, pointing to the animals, who were gravely seated before the window of the bone-house, with relaxed jaws, keeping their eyes riveted on its entrance or window. "Thy St. Bernard dogs, father, seem trained to serve a Christian in all ways, whether living or dead."

"Their quiet attitude and decent attention might indeed justify such a remark! Didst thou ever note such conduct in Uberto before?" returned the Augustine, addressing the servants of the convent, for the actions of the animals were a study and a subject of great interest to all of St. Bernard.

"They tell me that another fresh body has been put into the house, since I last came down the mountain," remarked Pierre, who was quietly disposing of a mule in a manner more favorable for Adelheid to mount: "the mastiff scents the dead. It was this that brought him to the Refuge last night, Heaven be praised for the mercy!"

This was said with the indifference that habit is apt to create, for the usage of leaving bodies uninterred had no

influence on the feelings of the guide, but it did not the less strike those who had descended from the convent.

"Thou art the last that came down thyself," said one of the servants; "nor have any come up, but those who are now safe in the convent, taking their rest after last night's tempest."

"How canst utter this idle nonsense, Henri, when a fresh body is in the house! This lady counted them but now, and there are four; three was the number that I showed the Piedmontese noble whom I led from Aoste, the day thou meanest."

"So soon! so soon! so suddenly—oh! it is he!"

"Of whom art thou speaking, dear?" demanded the wondering, but not the less awe-struck, Adelheid, believing that the weakened nerves of the poor girl were unstrung by the horror of the spectacle—"it is a traveller like ourselves, that has unhappily perished in the very storm from which, by the kindness of Providence, we have been permitted to escape. Thou shouldst not tremble thus; for fearful as it is, he is in a condition to which we all must come."

Adelheid, alarmed at the violence of Christine's feelings, was quite at a loss to account for them, when the relaxed grasp and the dying voice showed that her friend had fainted. Sigismund was one of the first to come to the assistance of his sister, who was soon restored to consciousness by the ordinary applications. In order to effect the cure she was borne to a rock at some little distance from the rest of the party, where none of the other sex presumed to come, with the exception of her brother. The latter stayed but a moment, for a stir in the little party at the bone-house induced him to go thither. His return was slow, thoughtful, and sad.

"The feelings of our poor Christine have been unhinged, and she is too easily excited to undergo the vicissitudes of a journey," observed Adelheid, after having announced the restoration of the sufferer to her senses, "have you seen her thus before?"

"No angel could be more tranquil and happy than my cruelly treated sister was until this last disgrace. You appear ignorant yourself of the melancholy truth?"

Adelheid looked her surprise.

"The dead man is he who was so lately intended to be the master of my sister's happiness, and the wounds on his body leave little doubt that he has been murdered."

The emotion of Christine needed no further explanation.

"Murdered!" repeated Adelheid, in a whisper.

"Of that frightful truth there can be no question. Your father and our friends are now employed in making the examinations which may hereafter be useful in discovering the authors of the deed."

"Sigismund?"

"What wouldst thou, Adelheid?"

"Thou hast felt resentment against this unfortunate man?"

"I deny it not. Could a brother feel otherwise?"

"But now—now that God hath so fearfully visited him?"

"From my soul I forgive him. Had we met in Italy, whither I knew he was going—but this is foolish."

"Worse than that, Sigismund."

"From my inmost soul I pardon him. I never thought him worthy of her whose simple affections were won by the first signs of his pretended interest; but I could not wish him so cruel and sudden an end. May God have mercy on him, as he is pardoned by me."

Adelheid received the silent pressure of the hand which followed with pious satisfaction. They then separated—he to join the group that was collected around the body, and she to take her station again near Christine. The former, however, was met by the Signor Grimaldi, who urged his immediate departure with the females to the convent, promising that the rest of the travellers should follow as soon as the present melancholy duty was ended. As Sigismund had no wish to be a party in what was going on, and there was reason to think his sister would be spared much pain by quitting the spot, he gladly acquiesced in the proposal. Immediate steps were taken for its accomplishment.

Christine mounted her mule in obedience to her brother's desire, quietly, and without remonstrance; but her death-like countenance and fixed eye betrayed the violence of the shock she had received. During the whole of the ride to the convent she spoke not, and, as those around her felt for and understood her distress, the little cavalcade could not have been more melancholy and silent had it borne with it the body of the slain. In an hour they reached the long-sought-for and so anxiously desired place of rest.

While this disposition of the feebler portion of the party was making, a different scene had taken place near what have been already so well called the houses of the living and the dead. As there existed no human habitation within several leagues of the abode of the Augustines on either side of the mountain, and as the paths were much frequented in the summer, the monks exercised a species of civil jurisdiction in such cases as required a prompt exercise of justice, or a necessary respect for those forms that might be important in its administration hereafter before the more regular authorities. It was no sooner known, therefore, that there was reason to suspect an act of violence had been committed, than the good clavier set seriously about taking the necessary steps to authenticate all those circumstances that could be accurately ascertained.

The identity of the body as that of Jacques Colis, a small but substantial proprietor of the country of Vaud, was quickly established. To this fact not only several of the travellers could testify, but he was also known to one of the muleteers, of whom he had engaged a beast to be left at Aoste, and, it will also be remembered, he had been seen by Pierre at Martigny while making his arrangements to pass the mountain. Of the mule there were no other traces than a few natural signs around the building, but which might equally be attributed to the beasts that still awaited the leisure of the travellers. The manner in which the unhappy man had come by his death, admitted of no dispute. There were several wounds in the body, and a knife of the sort then much used by travellers of an ordinary class, was left sticking in his back in a position to render it impossible to attribute the end of the sufferer to suicide. The clothes, too, exhibited proofs of a struggle; for they were torn and soiled, but nothing had been taken away. A little gold was found in the pockets, and though in no great plenty, still enough to weaken the first impression that there had also been a robbery.

"This is wonderful," observed the good clavier, as he noted the last circumstance; "the dross which leads so many souls to damnation, has been neglected, while Christian blood has been shed! This seems an act of vengeance rather than of cupidity. Let us now examine if any proofs are to be found of the scene of this tragedy."

The search was unsuccessful. The whole of the sur-

rounding region being composed of ferruginous rocks and their *débris*, it would not, indeed, have been an easy matter to trace the march of an army by their footsteps. The stain of blood, however, was nowhere discoverable, except on the spot where the body had been found. The house itself furnished no particular evidence of the bloody scene of which it had been a witness. The bones of those who had died long before were lying on the stones, it is true, broken and scattered; but, as the curious were wont to stop, and sometimes to enter among and handle these remains of mortality, there was nothing new or peculiar in their present condition.

The interior of the dead-house was obscure, and suited in this particular, at least, to its solemn office. While making the latter part of their examination, the monk and the two nobles, who began to feel a lively interest in the late event, stood before the window, gazing in at the gloomy but instructive scene. One body was so placed as to receive a few of the direct rays of the morning light, and it was consequently much more conspicuous than the rest, though even this was a dark and withered mummy that presented scarcely a vestige of the being it had been. Like all the others whose parts still clung together, it had been placed against the wall, in the attitude of one that is seated, with the head fallen forward. The latter circumstance had brought the blackened and shrivelled face into the line of light. It had the ghastly grin of death, the features being distorted by the process of evaporation, and was altogether a revolting but salutary monitor of the common lot.

"'Tis the body of the poor vine-dresser," remarked the monk, more accustomed to the spectacle than his companions, who had shrunk from the sight; "he unwisely slept on yonder naked rock, and it proved to him the sleep of death. There have been many masses for his soul, but what is left of his material remains still lie unreclaimed. But—how is this! Pierre, thou hast lately passed this place; what was the number of the bodies, at thy last visit?"

"Three, reverend clavier; and yet the ladies spoke of four. I looked for the fourth when in the building, but there appeared none fresh, except this of poor Jacques Colis."

"Come hither, and say if there do not appear to be two

in the far corner—here, where the body of thy old comrade the guide was placed, from respect for his calling ; surely, there at least is a change in its position.”

Pierre approached, and taking off his cap in reverence, he leaned forward in the building, so as to exclude the external light from his eyes.

“ Father ! ” he said, drawing back in surprise, “ there is truly another ; though I overlooked it when we entered the place.”

“ This must be examined into ! The crime may be greater than we had believed ! ”

The servants of the convent and Pierre, whose long services rendered him a familiar of the brotherhood, now re-entered the building, while those without impatiently awaited the result. A cry from the interior prepared the latter for some fresh subject of horror, when Pierre and his companion quickly reappeared, dragging a living man into the open air. When the light permitted, those who knew him recognized the mild demeanor, the subdued look, and the uneasy, distrustful glance of Balthazar.

The first sensation of the spectators was that of open amazement ; but dark suspicion followed. The Baron, the two Genoese, and the monk, had all been witnesses of the scene in the great square of Vévey. The person of the headsman had become so well known to them by the passage on the lake and the event just alluded to, that there was not a moment of doubt touching his identity, and coupled with the circumstances of that morning, there remained little more that the clew was now found to the cause of the murder.

We shall not stop to relate the particulars of the examination. It was short, reserved, and had the character of an investigation instituted more for the sake of form, than from any incertitude there could exist on the subject of the facts. When the necessary inquiries were ended, the two nobles mounted. Father Xavier led the way, and the whole party proceeded toward the summit of the pass, leading Balthazar a prisoner, and leaving the body of Jacques Colis to its final rest, in that place where so many human forms had evaporated into the air before him, unless those who had felt an interest in him in life should see fit to claim his remains. The ascent between the Refuge and the summit of St. Bernard is much more severe than on any other part of the road. The end of the convent, overhanging the

northern brow of the gorge, and looking like a mass of that ferruginous and melancholy rock which gave the whole region so wild and so unearthly an aspect, soon became visible, carved and moulded into the shape of a rude human habitation. The last pitch was so steep as to be formed into a sort of stairway, up which the groaning mules toiled with difficulty. This labor overcome, the party stood on the highest point of the pass. Another minute brought them to the door of the convent.

CHAPTER XXV.

“ —Hadst thou not been by,
A fellow by the hand of nature marked,
Noted, and signed to do a deed of shame,
This murder had not come into my mind.”

—SHAKESPEARE.

THE arrival of Sigismund's party at the hospice preceded that of the other travellers more than an hour. They were received with the hospitality with which all were then welcomed at this celebrated convent; the visits of the curious and the vulgar not having blunted the benevolence of the monks, who, mostly accustomed to entertain the low-born and ignorant, were always happy to relieve the monotony of their solitude by intercourse with guests of a superior class. The good clavier had prepared the way for their reception; for even on the wild ridge of St. Bernard, we do not fare the worse for carrying with us a prestige of that rank and consideration that are enjoyed in the world below. Although a mild Christian-like good-will were manifested to all, the heiress of Willading, a name that was generally known and honored between the Alps and the Jura, met with those proofs of *empressement* and deference which betray the secret thought, in despite of conventional forms, and which told her, plainer than the words of welcome, that the retired Augustines were not sorry to see so fair and so noble a specimen of their species within their dreary walls.

All this, however, was lost on Sigismund. He was too much occupied with the events of the morning to note other things; and, first committing Adelheid and his sis-

ter to the care of their woman, he went into the open air in order to await the arrival of the rest.

As it has been mentioned, the existence of the venerable convent of St. Bernard dates from a very remote period of Christianity. It stands on the very brow of the precipice which forms the last steep ascent in mounting to the Col. The building is a high, narrow, but vast, barrack-looking edifice, built with the ferruginous stone of the region, having its gable placed toward the Valais, and its front stretching in the direction of the gorge in which it stands. Immediately before its principal door, the rock rises in an ill-shapen hillock, across which runs the path to Italy. This is literally the highest point of the pass, as the building itself is the most elevated habitable abode in Europe. At this spot, the distance from rock to rock, spanning the gorge, may be a hundred yards, the wild and reddish piles rising on each side for more than a thousand feet. These are merely dwarfs, however, among the sister piles, several of which, in plain view of the convent, reached to the height of eternal snow. This point in the road attained, the path began immediately to descend, and the drippings of a snowbank before the convent door, which had resisted the greatest heat of the past summer, ran partly into the valley of the Rhone, and partly into Piedmont; the waters, after a long and devious course through the plains of France and Italy, meeting again in the common basin of the Mediterranean. The path, on quitting the convent, runs between the base of the rocks on its right and a little limpid lake on its left, the latter occupying nearly the entire cavity of the valley of the gorge. It then disappears between natural palisades of rock, at the other extremity of the Col. This is the point where the superfluous waters of the lake find their outlet, descending swiftly, in a brawling little brook, on the sunny side of the Alps. The frontier of Italy is met on the margin of the lake, a long musket-shot from the abode of the Augustines, and near the site of a temple that the Romans had raised in honor of Jupiter, in his attribute of director of storms.

Such was the outline of the view which presented itself to Sigismund, when he left the building to while away the time that must necessarily elapse before the arrival of the rest of the party. The hour was still early, though the great altitude of the site of the convent had brought it

beneath the influence of the sun's rays an hour before. He had learned from a servant of the Augustines, that a number of ordinary travellers, of whom in the fine season hundreds at a time frequently passed the night in their dormitories, were now breaking their fasts in the refectory of the peasants, and he was willing to avoid the questions that their curiosity might prompt when they came to hear what had occurred lower down on the mountain. One of the brotherhood was caressing four or five enormous mastiffs, that were leaping about and barking with deep throats in front of the convent, while old Uberto moved among them with a gravity and respect that better suited his years. Perceiving his guest, the Augustine quitted his dogs, and, lifting his eastern-looking cap, he gave him the salutation of the morning. Sigismund met the frank smile of the canon, who like himself was young, with a fit return. The occasion was such as Sigismund desired, and a friendly discourse succeeded, while they paced along the margin of the lake, holding the path that leads across the Col.

"You are young in your charitable office, brother," remarked the soldier, when familiarity was a little established. "This will be among the first of the winters you will have passed at your benevolent post?"

"It will make the eighth, as novice and as canon. We are early trained to this kind of life, though no practice will enable any of us to withstand the effect which the thin air and intense cold produces on the lungs many winters in succession. We go down to Martigny when there is occasion, and breathe an atmosphere better suited to man. Thou hadst an angry storm below the past night?"
"So angry that we thank God it is over, and that we are left to share your hospitality. Were there many on the mountain beside ourselves, or did any come up from Italy?"

"There were none but those who are now in the common refectory, and none came from Aoste. The season for the traveller is over. This is a month in which we see only those who are much pressed, and who have their reasons for trusting the weather. In the summer we sometimes lodge a thousand guests."

"They whom ye receive have reason to be thankful, reverend Augustine: for, in sooth, this does not seem a region that abounds in its fruits."

Sigismund and the monk looked around at the vast piles of ragged, naked rocks, and they smiled as their eyes met.

"Nature literally gives nothing," answered the Augustine; "even the fuel that warms us is transported leagues on the backs of mules, and thou wilt readily conceive that of all others this is a necessary we cannot forego. Happily, we have some of our ancient, and what were once rich, endowments; and——"

The young canon hesitated to proceed.

"You were about to say, father, that they who have the means to show gratitude are not always unmindful of the wants of those who share the same hospitality without possessing the same ability to manifest their respect for the institution."

The Augustine bowed, and he turned the discourse by pointing out the frontiers of Italy, and the site of the ancient temple, both of which they had by this time reached. An animal moved among the rocks, and attracted their attention.

"Can it be a chamois?" exclaimed Sigismund, whose blood began to quicken with a hunter's eagerness: "I would I had arms!"

"It is a dog, though not of our mountain breed! The mastiffs of the convent have failed in hospitality, and the poor beast has been driven to take refuge in this retired spot, in waiting for his master, who probably makes one of the party in the refectory. See, they come; their approaching footsteps have brought the cautious animal from his cover."

Sigismund saw, in truth, that a party of three pedestrians was quitting the convent, taking the path for Italy. A sudden and painful suspicion flashed upon his mind. The dog was Nettuno, most probably driven by the mastiffs, as the monk had suggested, to seek a shelter in this retreat; and one of those who approached, by his gait and stature, was no other than his master.

"Thou knowest, father," he said, with a clammy tongue, for he was strangely agitated between reluctance to accuse Maso of such a crime, and horror at the fate of Jacques Colis, "that there has been a murder on the mountain?"

The monk quietly assented. One who lived on the road, and in that age, was not easily excited by an event of so frequent occurrence. Sigismund hastily recounted

to his companion all the circumstances that were ther known to himself, and related the manner in which he had first met the Italian on the lake, and his general impressions concerning his character.

"All come and go unquestioned here," returned the Augustine, when the other had ended. "Our convent has been founded on charity, and we pray for the sinner without inquiring into the amount of his crime. Still we have authority, and it is especially our duty to keep the road clear that our own purposes may not be defeated. I leave thee to do what thou judgest most prudent and proper in a matter so delicate."

Sigismund was silent; but as the pedestrians were drawing near, his resolution was soon and sternly formed. The obligations that he owed to Maso made him more prompt, for it excited a jealous distrust of his own powers to discharge what he conceived to be a duty. Even those late events in which his sister was so wronged had their share, too, on the decision of a mind so resolute to be upright. Placing himself in the middle of the path, he awaited the arrival of the party, while the monk stood quietly at his side. When the travellers were within speaking distance, the young man first discovered that the companions of *Il Maledetto* were Pippo and Conrad. Their several rencontres had made him sufficiently acquainted with the persons of the two latter to enable him to recognize them at a glance; and Sigismund began to think the undertaking in which he had embarked more grave than he had at first imagined. Should there be a disposition to resist, he was but one against three.

"Buon giorno, Signor Capitano," cried Maso, saluting with his cap, when sufficiently near to those who occupied the path; "we meet often, and in all weathers; by day and by night; on the land and on the water; in the valley and on the mountain; in the city and on this naked rock, as Providence wills. As many chances try men's characters, we shall come to know each other in time!"

"Thou hast well observed, Maso; though I fear thou art a man oftener met than easily understood."

"Signore, I am amphibious, like Nettuno here, being part of the earth and part of the sea. As the learned say, I am not yet classed. We are repaid for an evil night by a fine day; and the descent into Italy will be pleasanter than we found the coming up. Shall I order honest

Giacomo of Aoste to prepare the supper, and to air the beds for the noble company that is to follow? You will scarce do more than reach his hostelry before the young and the beautiful will begin to think of their pillows."

"Maso, I had thought thee among our party, when I left the Refuge this morning?"

"By San Thomaso! Signore, but I had the same opinion touching yourself!"

"Thou wert early afoot, it would seem, or thou couldst not so much have preceded me?"

"Look you, brave Signor Sigismondo, for brave I know you to be, and in the water a swimmer little less determined than gallant Nettuno there—I am a traveller, and have much need of my time, which is the larger portion of my property. We sea-animals are sometimes rich, and sometimes poor, as the wind happens to blow, and of late I have been driven to struggle with foul gales and troubled waves. To such a man, an hour of industry in the morning often gives a heartier meal and sweeter rest at night. I left you all in the Refuge sleeping soundly, even to the mules,"—Maso laughed at his own fancies, as he included the brutes in the party,—“and I reached the convent just as the first touch of the sun tipped yonder white peak with its purple light.”

“As thou left us so early, thou mayst not have heard then, that the body of a murdered man was found in the bone-house—the building near that in which he slept—and that it is the body of one known?”

Sigismund spoke firmly and deliberately, as if he would come by degrees to his purpose, while, at the same time he made the other sensible of his being in earnest. Maso started. He made a movement so unequivocally like one which would have manifested an intention to proceed that the young man raised his hand to repulse him. But violence was unnecessary, for the mariner instantly became composed, and seemingly more disposed to listen.

“Where there has been a crime, Maso, there must have been a criminal!”

“The Bishop of Sion could not have made truth clearer to the sinner than yourself, Signor Sigismondo! Your manner leads me to ask what I have to do with this?”

“There has been a murder, Maso, and the murderer is sought. The dead was found near the spot where thou

passed the night; I shall not conceal the unhappy suspicions that are so natural."

"Diamine! where did you pass the night yourself, brave Capitano, if I may be so bold as to question my superior? Where did the noble Baron de Willading take his rest, and his fair daughter, and one nobler and more illustrious than he, and Pierre the guide, and—aye, and our friends, the mules again?"

Maso laughed recklessly once more, as he made this second allusion to the patient brutes. Sigismund disliked his levity, which he thought forced and unnatural.

"This reasoning may satisfy thee, unfortunate man, but it will not satisfy others. Thou wert alone, but we travelled in company; judging from thy exterior, thou art but little favored by fortune, whereas we are more happy in this particular; and thou hast been, and art still, in haste to depart, while the discovery of the foul deed is owing to us alone. Thou must return to the convent that this grave matter may, at least, be examined."

Il Maledetto seemed troubled. Once or twice he glanced his eye at the quiet athletic frame of the young man, and then turned them on the path in reflection. Although Sigismund narrowly watched the workings of his countenance, giving a little of his attention also, from time to time, to the movements of Pippo and the pilgrim, he preserved himself a perfectly calm exterior. Firm in his purpose, accustomed to make extraordinary exertions in his manly exercises, and conscious of his great physical force, he was not a man to be easily daunted. It is true that the companions of Maso conducted themselves in a way to excite no additional apprehensions on their account; for, on the announcement of the murder, they moved away from his person a little, as by a natural horror of the hand that could have done the deed. They now consulted together, and profiting by their situation behind the back of the Italian, they made signs to Sigismund of their readiness to assist should it be necessary. He received the signal with satisfaction; for, though he knew them to be knaves, he sufficiently understood the difference between audacious crime and mere roguery to believe they might, in this instance at least, prove true.

"Thou wilt return to the convent, Maso," resumed the young soldier, who would gladly avoid a struggle with a man who had done him and those he loved so much ser-

vice, though resolved to discharge what he conceived to be an imperious duty; "this pilgrim and his friend will be of our party, in order that, when we quit the mountain, all may leave it blameless and unsuspected."

"Signor Sigismondo, the proposal is fair; it has a touch of reason, I allow; but unluckily it does not suit my interests. I am engaged in a delicate mission, and too much time has been already lost by the way to waste more without good cause. I have great pity for poor Jacques Colis——"

"Ha! thou knowest the sufferer's name, then; thy unlucky tongue hath betrayed thee, Maso!"

Il Maledetto was again troubled. His features betrayed it, for he frowned like a man who had committed a grave fault in a matter touching an important interest. His olive complexion changed, and his interrogator thought that his eye quailed before his own fixed look. But the emotion was transient, and shuddering, as if to shake off a weakness, his appearance became once more natural and composed.

"Thou makest no reply?"

"Signore, you have my answer; affairs press, and my visit to the convent of San Bernardo has been made. I am bound to Aoste, and should be happy to do your bidding with the worthy Giacomo. I have but a step to make to find myself in the dominions of the house of Savoy; and with your leave, gallant Capitano, I will now take it."

Maso moved a little aside with the intention to pass Sigismund, when Pippo and Conrad threw themselves on him from behind, pinning his arms to his side by main force. The face of the Italian grew livid, and he smiled with the contempt and hatred of an inveterately angered man. Assembling all his force, he suddenly exerted it with the energy and courage of a lion, shouting—

"Nettuno!"

The struggle was short but fierce. When it terminated, Pippo lay bleeding among the rocks with a broken head, and the pilgrim was gasping near him under the tremendous grip of the animal. Maso himself stood firm, though pale and frowning like one who had collected all his energies, both physical and moral, to meet this emergency.

"Am I a brute to be set upon by the scum of the earth?" he cried. "If thou wouldst aught with me, Signor Sigismondo, raise thine own arm, but strike not with the hands

of these base reptiles. Thou wilt find me a man, in strength and courage, at least not unworthy of thyself."

"The attack on thy person, Maso, was not made by my order, nor by my desire," returned Sigismund, reddening. "I believe myself sufficient to arrest thee, and if not, here come assistants that thou wilt scarce deem it prudent to resist."

The Augustine had stepped on a rock the moment the struggle commenced, whence he made a signal which brought all the mastiffs from the convent. These powerful animals now arrived in a group, apprised by their instinct that strife was afoot. Nettuno immediately released the pilgrim and stood at bay, too faithful to desert his master in his need, and yet too conscious of the force opposed to him to court a contest so unequal. Luckily for the noble dog, the friendship of old Uberto proved his protection. When the younger animals saw their patriarch disposed to amity, they forbore their attack, waiting at least for another signal to be given. In the meanwhile, Maso had time to look about him, and to form his decision less under the influence of surprise and feeling than had been previously the case.

"Signore," he answered, "since it is your pleasure, I will return among the Augustines. But I ask, as simple justice, that, if I am to be hunted by dogs as a beast of prey, all who were in the same circumstances as myself may become subject to the same rule. This pilgrim and the Neapolitan came up the mountain yesterday, as well as myself, and I demand their arrest until they too can give an account of themselves. It will not be the first time that we have been inhabitants of the same prison."

Conrad crossed himself in submission, neither he nor Pippo raising any objection to the step. On the contrary, each frankly admitted it was no more than equitable on its face.

"We are poor travellers on whom many accidents have already alighted, and we may well be pressed to reach the end of our journey," said the pilgrim; "but that justice may be done, we shall submit without a murmur. I am loaded with the sins of many besides my own, however, and St. Peter he knows that the last are not light. This holy canon will see that masses are said in the convent chapel in behalf of those for whom I travel; this duty done, I am an infant in your hands."

The good Augustine professed the perfect readiness of the fraternity to pray for all who were in necessity, with the single proviso that they should be Christians. With this amicable understanding then, the peace was made between them, and the parties immediately took the path that led back to the convent. On reaching the building, Maso, with the two travellers who had been found in his company, were placed in safe keeping in one of the rooms of the solid edifice, until the return of the clavier should enable them to vindicate their innocence.

Satisfied with himself for the part he had acted in the late affair, Sigismund strolled into the chapel, where at that early hour some of the brotherhood were always occupied in saying masses in behalf of the souls of the living or of the dead. He was here when he received a note from the Signor Grimaldi, apprising him of the arrest of his father, and the dark suspicions that were so naturally connected with the transaction. It is unnecessary to dwell on the nature of the shock he received from this intelligence. After a few moments of bitter anguish, he perceived the urgency of making his sister acquainted with the truth as speedily as possible. The arrival of the party from the refuge was expected every moment, and by delay he increased the risk of Christine's hearing the appalling fact from some other quarter. He sought an audience, therefore, with Adelheid the instant he had summoned sufficient self-command to undertake the duty.

Mademoiselle de Willading was struck with the pale brow and agitated air of the young soldier, at the first glance of her eye.

"Thou hast permitted this unexpected blow to affect thee unusually, Sigismund," she said, smiling, and offering her hand; for she felt that the circumstances were those in which cold and heartless forms should give place to feeling and sincerity. "Thy sister is tranquil, if not happy."

"She does not know the worst—she has yet to learn the most cruel part of the truth, Adelheid; they have found one concealed among the dead of the bone-house, and are now leading him here as the murderer of poor Jacques Colis!"

"Another!" said Adelheid, turning pale in alarm. "We appear to be surrounded by assassins!"

"No, it cannot be true! I know my poor father's mild-

ness of disposition too well ; his habitual tenderness to all around him ; his horror at the sight of blood, even for his odious task ! ”

“ Sigismund, thy father ! ”

The young man groaned. Concealing his face with his hands, he sank into a seat. The fearful truth, with all its causes and consequences, began to dawn upon Adelheid. Sinking upon a chair herself, she sat long looking at the convulsed and working frame of Sigismund in silent horror. It appeared to her, that Providence, for some great but secret purpose, was disposed to visit them all with more than a double amount of its anger, and that a family which had been accursed for so many generations, was about to fill the measure of its woes. Still her own true heart did not change. On the contrary, its long-cherished and secret purpose rather grew stronger under this sudden appeal to its generous and noble properties, and never was the resolution to devote herself, her life, and all her envied hopes, to the solace of his unmerited wrongs, so strong riveted as at that trying moment.

In a little time Sigismund regained enough self-command to be able to commence the narrative of what had passed. They then concerted together the best means to make Christine acquainted with that which it was absolutely necessary she should now know.

“ Tell her the simple truth,” added Sigismund ; “ it cannot long be concealed, and it were better that she knew it ; but tell her, also, my firm dependence on our father’s innocence. God, for one of those inscrutable purposes which set human intelligence at defiance, has made him a common executioner, but the curse has not extended to his nature. Trust me, dearest Adelheid, a more gentle, dove-like nature does not exist in man than that of the poor Balthazar—the despised and persecuted Balthazar. I have heard my mother dwell upon the nights of anguish and sufferings that have preceded the day on which the duties of his office were to be discharged ; and often have I heard that admirable woman, whose spirit is far more equal to support our unmerited fortunes, declare she has often prayed that he and all that are hers, might die, so that they died innocently, rather than one of a temper so gentle and harmless should again be brought to endure the agony she had witnessed ! ”

“ It is unhappy that he should be here at so luckless a

moment ! What unhappy motives can have led thy father to this spot, at a time so extraordinary ?”

“Christine will tell thee that she expected to see him at the convent. We are a race proscribed, Mademoiselle de Willading, but we are human.”

“Dearest Sigismund——”

“I feel my injustice, and can only pray to be forgiven. But there are moments of feeling so intense, that I am ready to believe and treat all of my species as common enemies. Christine is an only daughter, and thou thyself, beloved Adelheid, kind, dutiful, and good as I know thee to be, art not more dear to the Baron de Willading than my poor sister is among us. Her parents have yielded her to thy generous kindness, for they believe it for her good ; but their hearts have been wrung by the separation. Thou didst not know it, but Christine took her last embrace of her mother here on the mountain, at Liddes, and it was then agreed that her father should watch her in safety over the Col, and bestow the final blessing at Aoste. Mademoiselle de Willading, you move in pride, surrounded by many protectors, who are honored in doing you service ; but the abased and the hunted must indulge even their best affections stealthily, and without obtrusion ! The love and tenderness of Balthazar would pass for mockery with the vulgar ! Such is man in his habits and opinions, when wrong usurps the place of right.”

Adelheid saw that the moment was not favorable for urging consolation, and she abstained from a reply. She rejoiced, however, to hear the presence of the headsman so satisfactorily accounted for, though she could not quiet herself from apprehension that the universal weakness of human nature, which so suddenly permits the perversion of the best of our passions to the worst, and the dreadful probability that Balthazar, suffering intensely by this compelled separation from his daughter, on accidentally encountering the man who was its cause, might have listened to some violent impulse of resentment and revenge. She saw also that Sigismund, in despite of his general confidence in the principles of his father, had fearful glimmerings of some such event, and that he fearfully anticipated the worst, even while he most professed confidence in the innocence of the accused. The interview was soon ended, and they separated ; each endeavoring to invent plausible reasons for what had happened.

The arrival of the party from the Refuge took place soon afterward. It was followed by the necessary explanations, and a more detailed narrative of all that had passed. A consultation was held between the chiefs of the brotherhood and the two old nobles, and the course it was most expedient to pursue was calmly and prudently discussed.

The result was not known for some hours later. It was then generally proclaimed in the convent that a grave and legal investigation of all the facts was to take place with the least possible delay.

The Col of St. Bernard, as has been stated already, lies within the limits of the present canton, but what was then the allied state of the Valais. The crime had consequently been committed within the jurisdiction of that country; but as the Valais was thus leagued with Switzerland, there existed such an intimate understanding between the two, that it was rare any grave proceedings were had against a citizen of either in the dominion of the other, without paying great deference to the feelings and the rights of the country of the accused. Messengers were therefore dispatched to Vévey, to inform the authorities of that place of a transaction which involved the safety of an officer of the great canton (for such was Balthazar), and which had cost a citizen of Vaud his life. On the other hand, a similar communication was sent to Sion, the two places being about equidistant from the convent, with such pressing invitations to the authorities to be prompt as were deemed necessary to bring on an immediate investigation. Melchior de Willading, in a letter to his friend the bailiff, set forth the inconvenience of his return with Adelheid at that late season, and the importance of the functionary's testimony, with such other statements as were likely to effect his wishes; while the superior of the brotherhood charged himself with making representations, with a similar intent, to the heads of his own republic. Justice in that age was not administered as frankly and openly as in this later period, its agents in the old world exercising even now a discretion that we are not accustomed to see confided to them. Her proceedings were enveloped in darkness, the blind deity being far more known in her decrees than in her principles, and mystery was then deemed an important auxiliary of power.

With this brief explanation we shall shift the time to

the third day from that on which the travellers reached the convent, referring the reader to the succeeding chapter for an account of what it brought forth.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“Anon a figure enters, quaintly neat,
All pride and business, bustle and conceit ;
With looks unaltered by these scenes of woe,
With speed that, entering, speaks his haste to go.
He bids the gazing throng around him fly,
And carries fate and physic in his eye.”—CRABBE.

THERE is another receptacle for those who die on the Great St. Bernard, hard by the convent itself. At the close of the time mentioned in the last chapter, and near the approach of night, Sigismund was pacing the rocks on which this little chapel stands, buried in reflections to which his own history and the recent events had given birth. The snow that fell during the late storm had entirely disappeared, and the frozen element was now visible only on those airy pinnacles that form the higher peaks of the Alps. Twilight had already settled into the lower valleys, but the whole of the superior region was glowing with the fairy-like lustre of the last rays of the sun. The air was chill, for at that hour and season, whatever might be the state of the weather, the evening invariably brought with it a positive sensation of cold in the gorge of St. Bernard, where frosts prevailed at night, even in midsummer. Still the wind, though strong, was balmy and soft, blowing athwart the heated plains of Lombardy, and reaching the mountains charged with the moisture of the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. As the young man turned in his walk and faced this breeze, it came over his spirit with a feeling of hope and home. The greater part of his life had been passed in the sunny country whence it blew, and there were moments when he was lulled into forgetfulness by the grateful recollections imparted by its fragrance. But when compelled to turn northward again, and his eye fell on the misty, hoary piles that distinguished his native land, rude and ragged faces of rock, frozen glaciers, and deep ravine-like valleys and glens, seemed to him to be types of his own stormy, unprofitable, and fruit-

less life, and to foretell a career which, though it might have touches of grandeur, was doomed to be barren of all that is genial and consolatory.

All in and about the convent was still. The mountain had an imposing air of deep solitude amid the wildest natural magnificence. Few travellers had passed since the storm, and, luckily for those who, under the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed, had so much desired privacy, all of these had diligently gone their several ways. None were left, therefore, on the Col, but those who had an interest in the serious investigations which were about to take place. An officer of justice from Sion, wearing the livery of Valais, appeared at a window, a sign that the regular authorities of the country had taken cognizance of the murder; but disappearing, the young man, to all external appearance, was left in the solitary possession of the pass. Even the dogs had been kennelled, and the pious monks were healthfully occupied in the religious offices of the vespers.

Sigismund turned his eyes upward to the apartment in which Adelheid and his sister dwelt, but as the solemn moment in which so much was to be decided drew nearer, they also had withdrawn into themselves, ceasing to hold communion, even by means of the eyes, with aught that might divert their holy and pure thoughts from ceaseless and intense devotional reflections. Until now he had been occasionally favored with an answering and kind look from one or the other of these single-hearted and affectionate girls, both of whom he so warmly loved, though with sentiments so different. It seemed that they too had at last left him to his isolated and hopeless existence. Sensible that this passing thought was weak and unmanly, the young man renewed his walk, and instead of turning as before, he moved slowly on, stopping only when he had reached the opening of the little chapel of the dead.

Unlike the building lower down the path, the bone-house at the convent is divided into two apartments; the exterior, and one that may be called interior, though both are open to the weather. The former contained piles of disjointed human bones, bleached by the storms that beat in at the windows, while the latter is consecrated to the covering of those that still preserve, in their outward appearance at least, some of the more familiar traces of humanity. The first had its usual complement of dissevered

and confounded fragments, in which the remains of young and old, of the two sexes, the fierce and the meek, the penitent and the sinner, lay in indiscriminate confusion—an eloquent reproach to the pride of man; while the walls of the last supported some twenty blackened and shrivelled effigies of the race, to show to what a pass of disgusting and frightful deformity the human form can be reduced, when deprived of that noble principle which likens it to its Divine Creator. On a table, in the centre of a group of black and grinning companions in misfortune, sat all that was left of Jacques Colis, who had been removed from the bone-house below to this at the convent for purposes connected with the coming investigation. The body was accidentally placed in such an attitude that the face was brought within the line of the parting light, while it had no other covering than the clothes worn by the murdered man in life. Sigismund gazed long at the pallid lineaments. They were still distorted with the agony produced by separating the soul from the body. All feeling of resentment for his sister's wrongs was lost in pity for the fate that had so suddenly overtaken one, in whom the passions, the interests, and the complicated machinery of this state of being, were so actively at work. Then came the bitter apprehension that his own father, in a moment of ungovernable anger, excited by the accumulated wrongs that bore so hard on him and his, might really have been the instrument of effecting the fearful and sudden change. Sickening with the thought, the young man turned and walked away toward the brow of the declivity. Voices, ascending to his ear, recalled him to the actual situation of things.

A train of mules were climbing the last acclivity where the path takes the broken precipitous appearance of a flight of steps. The light was still sufficient to distinguish the forms and general appearance of the travellers. Sigismund immediately recognized them to be the bailiff of Vévey and his attendants, for whose arrival the formal proceedings of the examination had alone been stayed.

“A fair evening, Herr Sigismund, and a happy meeting,” cried Peterchen, so soon as his weary mule, which frequently halted under its unwieldy burden, had brought him within hearing. “Little did I think to see thee again so quickly, and less still to lay eyes on this holy convent; for though the traveller might have returned in thy person, nothing short of a miracle——” Here the bailiff

winked, for he was one of those Protestants whose faith was most manifested in these side-hits at the opinions and practices of Rome,—“Nothing but a miracle, I say, and that too a miracle of some saint whose bones have been drying these ten thousand years, until every morsel of our weak flesh has fairly disappeared, could bring down old St. Bernard’s abode upon the shores of the Lemán. I have known many who have left Vaud to cross the Alps come back and winter in Vévey ; but never did I know the stone that was placed upon another, in a workmanlike manner, quit its bed without help from the hand of man. They say stones are particularly hard-hearted, and yet your saint and miracle-monger hath a way to move them ?”

Peterchen chuckled at his own pleasantry, as men in authority are apt to enjoy that which comes exclusively of their own cleverness, and he winked round among his followers, as if he would invite them to bear witness to the rap he had given the Papists, even on their own exclusive ground. When the platform of the Col was attained, he checked the mule and continued his address, for want of wind had nipped his wit, as it might be, in the bud.

“A bad business this, Herr Sigismund ; a thoroughly bad affair. It has drawn me far from home, at a ticklish season, and it has unexpectedly stopped the Herr von Wilading” (he spoke in German) “in his journey over the mountains, and that, too, at a moment when all had need be diligent among the Alps. How does the keen air of the Col agree with the fair Adelheid ?”

“God be thanked, Herr Bailiff, in bodily health that excellent young lady was never better.”

“God be thanked, right truly ! She is a tender flower, and one that might be suddenly cut off by the frosts of St. Bernard. And the noble Genoese who travels with so much modest simplicity, in a way to reprove the vain and idle—I hope he does not miss the sun among our rocks ?”

“He is an Italian, and must think of us and our climate according to his habits ; though in the way of health he seems at his ease.”

“Well, this is consolatory ! Herr Sigismund, were the truth known,” rejoined Peterchen, bending as far forward on his mule as a certain protuberance of his body would permit, and then suddenly drawing himself up again in reserve—“but as a State secret is a State secret, and least of all should it escape one who is truly and legitimately

a child of the State. My love and friendship for Melchior von Willading are great, and of right excellent quality; but I should not have visited this pass, were it not to do honor to our guest the Genoese. I would not that the noble stranger went down from our hills with an unsavory opinion of our hospitality. Hath the honorable châtelain from Sion reached the hill?"

"He has been among us since the turn of the day, mein herr, and is now in conference with those you have just named, on matters connected with the object of your common visit."

"He is an honest magistrate! and like ourselves, Master Sigismund, he comes of the pure German root, which is a foundation to support merit, though it might better be said by another. Had he a comfortable ride?"

"I have heard no complaint of his ascent."

"'Tis well. When the magistrate goes forth to do justice, he has a right to look for a fair time. All are then comfortable;—the noble Genoese, the honorable Melchior, and the worthy châtelain. And Jacques Colis?"

"You know his unhappy fate, Herr Bailiff," returned Sigismund briefly; for he was a little vexed with the other's phlegm in a matter that so nearly touched his own feelings.

"If I did not know it, Herr Steinbach, dost think I should now be here, instead of preparing for a warm bed near the great square of Vévey? Poor Jacques Colis! Well, he did the ceremonies of the abbaye an ill turn in refusing to buckle with the headsman's daughter, but I do not know that he at all deserved the fate with which he has met."

"God forbid that any who were hurt, and that perhaps not without reason, by his want of faith, should think his weakness merited a punishment so heavy!"

"Thou speakest like a sensible youth, a very sensible youth—aye, and like a Christian, Herr Sigismund," answered Peterchen, "and I approve of thy words. To refuse to wive a maiden and to be murdered, are very different offences, and should not be confounded. Dost think these Augustines keep kirschwasser among their stores? It is strong work to climb up to their abode, and strong toil needs strong drink. Well, should they not be so provided, we must make the best of their other liquors. Herr Sigismund, do me the favor to lend me thy arm."

The bailiff now alighted with stiffened limbs, and, taking the arm of the other, he moved slowly toward the building.

"It is damnable to bear malice, and doubly damnable to bear malice against the dead! Therefore, I beg you to take notice that I have quite forgotten the recent conduct of the deceased in the matter of our public games, as it becomes an impartial and upright judge to do. Poor Jacques Colis! Ah, death is awful at any time, but it is tenfold terrible to die in this sudden manner, post-haste, as it were, and that, too, on a path where we put one foot before the other with so much bodily pain. This is the ninth visit I have made the Augustines, and I cannot flatter the holy monks on the subject of their roads, much as I wish them well. Is the reverend clavier back at his post again?"

"He is, and has been active in taking the usual examinations."

"Activity is his strong property, and he needs be that, Herr Steinbach, who passeth the life of a mountaineer. The noble Genoese, and my ancient friend Melchior, and his fair daughter the beautiful Adelheid, and the equitable châtelain, thou sayest, are all fairly reposed and comfortable?"

"Herr Bailiff, they have reason to thank God that the late storm and their mental troubles have done them no harm."

"So—I would these Augustines kept kirschwasser among their liquors!"

Peterchen entered the convent, where his presence alone was wanting to proceed to business. The mules were housed, the guides received as usual in the building, and then the preparations for the long-delayed examinations were seriously commenced.

It has already been mentioned that the fraternity of St. Bernard was of very ancient origin. It was founded in the year 962 by Bernard de Menthon, an Augustine canon of Aoste in Piedmont, for the double purpose of bodily succor and spiritual consolation. The idea of establishing a religious community in the midst of savage rocks, and at the highest point trod by the foot of a man, was worthy of Christian self-denial and a benevolent philanthropy. The experiment appears to have succeeded in a degree that is commensurate with its noble intention; for centuries have

gone by, civilization has undergone a thousand changes, empires have been formed and upturned, thrones destroyed, and one half the world has been rescued from barbarism, while this piously founded edifice still remains in its simple and respectable usefulness where it was first erected, the refuge of the traveller and a shelter for the poor.

The convent buildings are necessarily vast, but, as all its other materials had to be transported to the place it occupies on the back of mules, they are constructed chiefly of the ferruginous, hoary-looking stones that were quarried from the native rock. The cells of the monks, the long corridors, refectories for the different classes of travellers, and suited to the numbers of the guests, as well as those for the canons and their servants, and lodging rooms of different degrees of magnitude and convenience, with a chapel of some antiquity and of proper size, composed then, as now, the internal arrangements. There is no luxury, some comfort in behalf of those in whom indulgence has become a habit, and much of the frugal hospitality that is addressed to the personal wants and the decencies of life. Beyond this, the building, the entertainment, and the brotherhood are marked by a severe monastic self-denial, which appears to have received a character of barren and stern simplicity from the unvarying nakedness of all that meets the eye in that region of frost and sterility.

We shall not stop to say much of the little courtesies and the ceremonious asseverations of mutual good-will and respect that passed between the Bailiff of Vévey and the Prior of St. Bernard, on the occasion of their present meeting. Peterchen was known to the brotherhood, and, though a Protestant, and one too that did not forbear to deliver his jest or his witticism against Rome and its flock at will, he was sufficiently well esteemed. In all the quêtes or collections of the convent, the well-meaning Bernois had really shown himself a man of bowels, and one that was disposed to favor humanity, even while it helped the cause of his arch-enemy, the Pope. The clavier was always well received, not only in his bailiwick but in his château, and in spite of numberless little skirmishes on doctrine and practice, they always met with a welcome and generally parted in peace. This feeling of amity and good-will extended to the superior and to all the others of the holy community, for in addition to a certain heartiness of character in the bailiff, there was mutual interest to maintain it. At

the period of which we write, the vast possessions with which the monks of St. Bernard had formerly been endowed were already much reduced by sequestrations in different countries, that of Savoy in particular, and they were reduced then, as now, to seek supplies to meet the constant demands of travellers in the liberality of the well-disposed and charitable ; and the liberality of Peterchen was thought to be cheaply purchased by his jokes, while, on the other hand, he had so many occasions, either in his own person or those of his friends, to visit the convent, that he always forbore to push contention to a quarrel.

“Welcome again, Herr Bailiff, and for the ninth time welcome !” continued the prior, as he took the hand of Peterchen, leading the way to his own private parlor ; “thou art always a welcome guest on the mountain, for we know that we entertain at least a friend.”

“And a heretic,” added Peterchen, laughing with all his might, though he uttered a joke which he now repeated for the ninth time. “We have met often, Herr Prior, and I hope we shall meet finally, after all our clamberings of mountains, as well as our clambering after worldly benefits, is ended, and that where honest men come together, in spite of Pope or Luther, books, sermons, aves, or devils ! This thought cheers me whenever I offer thee my hand,” shaking that of the other with a hearty good-will ; “for I should not like to think, Father Michael, that, when we set out on the last long journey, we are to travel forever in different ways. Thou may’st tarry awhile, if thou seest fit, in thy purgatory, which is a lodging of thine own invention, and should therefore suit thee, but I trust to continue on, until fairly housed in heaven, miserable and unhappy sinner that I am !”

Peterchen spoke in the confident voice of one accustomed to utter his sentiments to inferiors, who either dared not, or did not deem it wise to dispute his oracles ; and he ended with another deep-mouthed laugh, that filled the vaulted apartment of the smiling prior to the ceiling. Father Michael took all in good part, answering, as was his wont, in mildness and good-tempered charity ; for he was a priest of much learning, deep reflection, and rebuked opinions. The community over which he presided was so far worldly in its objects as to keep the canons in constant communion with men, and he would not now have met for the first time one of those self-satisfied, au-

thoritative, boisterous, well-meaning beings, of whose class Peterchen formed so conspicuous a member, had this been the first of the bailiff's visits to the Col. As it was, however, the prior not only understood the species, but he well knew the individual specimen, and he was well enough disposed to humor the noisy pleasantry of his companion. Disburdened of his superfluous clothing, delivered of his introductory jokes, and having achieved his salutations to the several canons, with suitable words of recognition to the three or four novices who were usually found on the mountain, Peterchen declared his readiness to enter on the duty of what the French call restoration. This want had been foreseen, and the prior led the way to a private refectory, where preparations had been made for a sufficient supper, the bailiff being very generally known to be a huge feeder.

"Thou wilt not fare as well as in thy warm and cheerful town of Vévey, which outdoes most of Italy in its pleasantness and fruits; but thou shalt, at least, drink of thine own warm wines," observed the superior, as they went along the corridor; "and a right good company awaits thee, to share not only thy repast, but thy good companionship."

"Hast ever a drop of kirschwasser, Brother Michael, in thy convent?"

"We have not only that, but we have the Baron de Willading, and a noble Genoese who is in his company; they are ready to set to, the moment they can see thy face."

"A noble Genoese!"

"An Italian gentleman, of a certainty; I think they call him a Genoese."

Peterchen stopped, laid a finger on his nose, and looked mysterious; but he forbore to speak, for, by the open, simple countenance of the monk, he saw that the other had no suspicion of his meaning.

"I will hazard my office of bailiff against that of thy worthy clavier, that he is just what he seemeth—that is to say, a Genoese!"

"The risk will not be great, for so he has already announced himself. We ask no questions here, and be he who or what he may, he is welcome to come, and welcome to depart, in peace."

"Aye, this is well enough for an Augustine on the top of the Alps—he hath attendants?"

"A menial and a friend; the latter, however, left the convent for Italy, when the noble Genoese determined to remain until this inquiry was over. There was something said of heavy affairs, which required that some explanations of the delay should be sent to others."

Peterchen again looked steadily at the prior, smiling, as in pity of his ignorance.

"Look thou, good prior, much as I love thee and thy convent, and Melchior von Willading and his daughter, I would have spared myself this journey but for that same Genoese. Let there be no questions, however, between us; the proper time to speak will come, and God forbid that I should be precipitate! Thou shalt then see in what manner a bailiff of the great canton can acquit himself! At present we will trust to thy prudence. The friend hath gone to Italy in haste, that the delay may not create surprise. Well, each one to his humor on the highway; it is mine to journey in honor and security, though others may have a different taste. Let there be little said, good Michael; not so much as an imprudent look of the eye;—and now, o' Heaven's sake, thy glass of kirsch-wasser!"

They were at the door of the refectory, and the conversation ceased. On entering, Peterchen found his friend the Baron, the Signor Grimaldi, and the châtelain of Sion, a grave ponderous dignitary of justice of German extraction, like himself and the prior, but whose race, from a long residence on the confines of Italy, had imbibed some peculiarities of the southern character. Sigismund and all the rest of the travellers were precluded from joining the repast, to which it was the intention of the prudent canons to give a semi-official character.

The meeting between Peterchen and those who had so lately quitted Vévey was not distinguished by any extraordinary movements of courtesy; but that between the bailiff and the châtelain, who represented the authorities of friendly and adjoining States, was marked by a profusion of politic and diplomatic civilities. Various personal and public inquiries were exchanged, each appearing to strive to outdo the other in manifesting interest in the smallest details on those points in which it was proper for a stranger to feel an interest. Though the distance between the two capitals was fully fifteen leagues, every foot of the ground was travelled over by one or the other of the

parties, either in commendation of its beauties, or in questions that touched its interests.

"We come equally of Teutonic fathers, Herr Châtelain," concluded the bailiff, as the whole party placed themselves at table, after the reverences and homages were thoroughly exhausted, "though Providence has cast our fortunes in different countries. I swear to thee, that the sound of thy German is music to my ears! Thou hast wonderfully escaped corruptions, though compelled to consort so much with the bastards of Romans, Celts, and Burgundians, of whom thou hast so many in this portion of thy States. It is curious to observe,"—for Peterchen had a little of an antiquarian flavor among other crude elements of his character—"that whenever a much-trodden path traverses a country, its people catch the blood as well as the opinions of those who travel it, after the manner that tares are scattered and sown by the passing winds. Here has the St. Bernard been a thoroughfare since the time of the Romans, and thou wilt find as many races among those who dwell on the wayside, as there are villages between the convent and Vévey. It is not so with you of the Upper Valais, Herr Châtelain; there the pure race exists as it came from the other side of the Rhine, and honored and preserved may it continue for another thousand years!"

There are few people so debased in their own opinion as not to be proud of their peculiar origin and character. The habit of always viewing ourselves, our motives, and even our conduct, on the favorable side, is the parent of self-esteem; and this weakness carried into communities, commonly gets to be the cause of a somewhat fallacious gauge of merit among the population of entire countries. The châtelain, Melchior de Willading, and the prior, all of whom came from the same Teutonic root, received the remark complacently, for each felt it an honor to be descended from such ancestors; while the more polished and artificial Italian succeeded in concealing the smile that on such an occasion would be apt to play about the mouth of a man whose parentage ran through a long line of sophisticated and politic nobles, into the consuls and patriicians of Rome, and most probably through these again into the wily and ingenious Greek, a root distinguished for civilization when these patriarchs of the north lay buried in the depths of barbarism.

This little display of national vanity ended, the discourse took a more general turn. Nothing occurred during the entertainment, however, to denote that any of the company bethought him of the business on which they had met. But, just as twilight failed, and the repast was ended, the prior invited his guests to lend their attention to the matter in hand, recalling them from their friendly attacks, their time-worn jokes, and their attenuated logic, in all of which Peterchen, Melchior, and the châtelain had indulged with some freedom, to a question involving the life or death of at least one of their fellow-creatures.

The subordinates of the convent were occupied during the supper with the arrangements that had been previously commanded, and when Father Michael arose and intimated to his companions that their presence was now expected elsewhere, he led them to a place that had been completely prepared for their reception.

CHAPTER XXVII.

“Was ever tale
With such a gallant modesty rehearsed?”—HOME.

PURPOSES of convenience, as well as others that were naturally connected with the religious opinions, not to say the superstitions of most of the prisoners, had induced the monks to select the chapel of the convent for the judgment hall. This consecrated part of the edifice was of sufficient size to contain all who were accustomed to assemble within its walls. It was decorated in the manner that is usual to churches of the Romish persuasion, having its master altar, and two of smaller size that were dedicated to esteemed saints. A large lamp illuminated the place, though the great altar lay in doubtful light, leaving play for the imagination to people and adorn that part of the chapel. Within the railing of the choir there stood a table; it held some object that was concealed from view by a sweeping pall. Immediately beneath the lamp was placed another, which served the purposes of the clavier, who acted as a clerk on this occasion. They who were to fill the offices of judges took their stations near. A knot of females were clustered within the shadows of one of the

side altars, hovering around each other in the way that their sensitive sex is known to interpose between the exhibition of its peculiar weaknesses and the rude observations of the world. Stifled sobs and convulsive movements occasionally escaped this little group of acutely feeling and warm-hearted beings, betraying the strength of the emotions they would fain conceal. The canons and novices were ranged on one side, the guides and muleteers formed a background to the whole, while the fine form of Sigismund stood stern and motionless as a statue, on the steps of the altar which was opposite to the females. He watched the minutest proceeding of the investigation with a steadiness that was the result of a severe practice in self-command, and a jealous determination to suffer no new wrong to be accumulated on the head of his father.

When the little confusion produced by the entrance of the party from the refectory had subsided, the prior made a signal to one of the officers of justice. The man disappeared, and shortly returned with one of the prisoners, the investigation being intended to embrace the cases of all who had been detained by the prudence of the monks. Balthazar (for it was he) approached the table in his usual meek manner. His limbs were unbound, and his exterior calm, though the quick unquiet movements of his eye, and the workings of his pale features, whenever a suppressed sob from among the females reached his ear, betrayed the inward struggle he had to maintain, in order to preserve appearances. When he was confronted with his examiners, Father Michael bowed to the châtelain; for, though the others were admitted by courtesy to participate in the investigations, the legal right to proceed in an affair of this nature within the limits of the Valais, belonged to this functionary alone.

"Thou art called Balthazar?" abruptly commenced the Judge, glancing at his notes.

The answer was a simple inclination of the body.

"And thou art the headsman of the canton of Berne?"

A similar silent reply was given.

"The office is hereditary in thy family. It has been so for ages?"

Balthazar erected his frame, breathing heavily, like one oppressed at the heart, but who would bear down his feelings before he answered.

"Herr Châtelain," he said, with energy, "by the judgment of God it has been so."

"Honest Balthazar, thou throwest too much emphasis into thy words," interposed the bailiff. "All that belongs to authority is honorable, and is not to be treated as an evil. Hereditary claims, when venerable by time and use, have a double estimation with the world, since it brings the merit of the ancestor to sustain that of the descendant. We have our rights of the *bürgerschaft*, and thou thy rights of execution. The time has been when thy fathers were well content with their privilege."

Balthazar bowed in submission ; but he seemed to think any other reply unnecessary. The fingers of Sigismund writhed on the hilt of his sword, and a groan, which the young man well knew had been wrested from the bosom of his mother, came from the women.

"The remark of the worthy and honorable bailiff is just," resumed the Valaisan ; "all that is of the state, is for the good of the state, and all that is for the comfort and security of man is honorable. Be not ashamed, therefore, of thy office, Balthazar, which, being necessary, is not to be idly condemned ; but answer faithfully and with truth to the questions I am about to put. Thou hast a daughter ?"

"In that much, at least, have I been blessed !"

The energy with which he spoke caused a sudden movement in the judges. They looked at each other in surprise, for it was apparent they did not expect these touches of human feeling in a man who lived, as it were, in constant warfare with his fellow creatures.

"Thou hast reason," returned the châtelain, recovering his gravity ; "for she is said to be both dutiful and comely. Thou wert about to marry this daughter ?"

Balthazar acknowledged the truth of this by another inclination.

"Didst thou ever know a Vévaisan of the name of Jacques Colis ?"

"Mein Herr, I did. He was to have become my son."

The châtelain was again surprised ; for the steadiness of the reply denoted innocence, and he studied the countenance of the prisoner intently. He found apparent frankness where he had expected to meet with subterfuge, and like all who have great acquaintance with crime, his distrust increased. The simplicity of one who really had nothing to conceal, unlike that appearance of firmness

which is assumed to affect innocence, set his shrewdness at fault, though familiar with most of the expedients of the guilty.

"This Jacques Colis was to have wived thy daughter?" continued the châtelain, growing more wary as he thought he detected greater evidence of art in the accused.

"It was so understood between us."

"Did he love thy child?"

The muscles of Balthazar's mouth played convulsively; the twitchings of the lip seeming to threaten a loss of self-command.

"Mein Herr, I believed it."

"Yet he refused to fulfil the engagement?"

"He did."

Even Marguerite was alarmed at the deep emphasis with which this answer was given, and for the first time in her life, she trembled lest the accumulating load of obloquy had indeed been too strong for her husband's principles.

"Thou felt anger at his conduct, and in the public manner in which he disgraced thee and thine?"

"Herr Châtelain, I am human. When Jacques Colis repudiated my daughter, he bruised a tender plant in the girl, and he caused bitterness in a father's heart."

"Thou hast received instruction superior to thy condition, Balthazar?"

"We are a race of executioners, but we are not the unnurtured herd that people fancy. 'Tis the will of Berne that made me what I am, and no desire nor wants of my own."

"The charge is honorable, as are all that come of the state," repeated the other, with the formal readiness in which set phrases are uttered; "the charge is honorable for one of thy birth. God assigns to each his station on earth, and he has fixed thy duties. When Jacques Colis refused thy daughter, he left his country to escape thy revenge?"

"Were Jacques Colis living he would not utter so foul a lie!"

"I knew his honest and upright nature!" exclaimed Marguerite, with energy. "God pardon me that I ever doubted it!"

The judges turned inquisitive glances toward the indistinct cluster of females, but the examination did not the less proceed.

"Thou knowest, then, that Jacques Colis is dead?"

"How can I doubt it, mine herr, when I saw his bleeding body?"

"Balthazar, thou seemest disposed to aid the examination, though with what views is better known to Him who sees the inmost heart, than to me. I will come at once, therefore, to the most essential facts. Thou art a native and a resident of Berne, the headsman of the canton—a creditable office in itself, though the ignorance and prejudices of man are not apt so to consider it. Thou would'st have married thy daughter with a substantial peasant of Vaud. The intended bridegroom repudiated thy child, in face of the thousands who came to Vévey to witness the festivities of the abbaye; he departed on a journey to avoid thee, or his own feelings, or rumor, or what thou wilt. He met his death by murder on this mountain; his body was discovered with the knife in the recent wound, and thou, who should'st have been on thy path homeward, wert found passing the night near the murdered man. Thine own reason will show thee the connection which we are led to form between these several events, and thou art now required to explain that which to us seems so suspicious, but which to thyself may be clear. Speak freely, but speak truth, as thou reverest God, and in thine own interest."

Balthazar hesitated, and appeared to collect his thoughts. His head was lowered in a thoughtful attitude, and then looking his examiner steadily in the face, he replied. His manner was calm, and the tone in which he spoke, if not that of one innocent in fact, was that of one who well knew how to assume the exterior of that character.

"Herr Châtelain," he said, "I have foreseen the suspicions that would be apt to fasten on me in these unhappy circumstances, but, used to trust in Providence, I shall speak the truth without fear. Of the intention of Jacques Colis to depart I knew nothing. He went his way privately, and if you will do me the justice to reflect a little, it will be seen that I was the last man to whom he would have been likely to let his intention be known. I came up the St. Bernard, drawn by a chain that your own heart will own is difficult to break if you are a father. My daughter was on the road to Italy with kind and true friends, who were not ashamed to feel for a headsman's child, and who took her in order to heal the wound that had been so unfeelingly inflicted."

"This is true!" exclaimed the Baron de Willading. "Balthazar surely says naught but truth here!"

"This is known and allowed; crime is not always the result of cool determination, but it comes of terror, of sudden thought, the angry mood, the dire temptation, and a fair occasion. Though thou left'st Vévey ignorant of Jacques Colis' departure, didst thou hear nothing of his movements by the way?"

Balthazar changed color. There was evidently a struggle in his bosom, as if he shrank from making an acknowledgment that might militate against his interests; but, glancing an eye at the guides, he recovered his proper tone of mind, and answered firmly:

"I did. Pierre Dumont had heard the tale of my child's disgrace, and ignorant that I was the injured parent, he told me of the manner in which the unhappy man had retreated from the mockery of his companions. I knew, therefore, that we were on the same path."

"And yet thou perseveredst?"

"In what, Herr Châtelain? Was I to desert my daughter, because one who had already proved false to her stood in my way?"

"Thou hast well answered, Balthazar," interrupted Marguerite. "Thou hast answered as became thee! We are few, and we are all to each other. Thou wert not to forget our child because it pleased others to despise her."

The Signor Grimaldi bent toward the Valaisan, and whispered near his ear.

"This hath the air of nature," he observed; "and does it not account for the appearance of the father on the road taken by the murdered man?"

"We do not question the probability or justness of such a motive, signore; but revenge may have suddenly mounted to the height of ferocity in some wrangle: one accustomed to blood yields easily to his passions and his habits."

The truth of these suggestions was plausible, and the noble Genoese drew back in cold disappointment. The châtelain consulted with those about him, and then desired the wife to come forth in order to be confronted with her husband. Marguerite obeyed. Her movement was slow, and her whole manner that of one who yielded to a stern necessity.

"Thou art the headsman's wife?"

"And a headsman's daughter."

"Marguerite is a well-disposed and a sensible woman," put in Peterchen; "she understands that an office under the state can never bring disgrace in the eyes of reason, and wishes no part of her history or origin to be concealed."

The glance that flashed from the eye of Balthazar's wife was withering; but the dogmatic bailiff was by far too well satisfied with his own wisdom to be conscious of its effects.

"And a headsman's daughter," continued the examining judge; "why art thou here?"

"Because I am a wife and a mother. As the latter I came upon the mountain, and as a wife I have mounted to the convent to be present at this examination. They will have it that there is blood upon the hands of Balthazar, and I am here to repel the lie."

"And yet thou hast not been slow to confess thy connection with a race of executioners! They who are accustomed to see their fellows die might have less warmth in meeting a plain inquiry of justice!"

"Herr Châtelain, thy meaning is understood. We have been weighed upon heavily by Providence, but, until now, they whom we have been made to serve have had the policy to treat us with fair words! Thou hast spoken of blood; that which has been shed by Balthazar, by his, and by mine, lies on the consciences of those who commanded it to be spilt. The unwilling instruments of thy justice are innocent before God."

"This is strange language for people of thy employment! Dost thou, too, Balthazar, speak and think with thy consort in this matter?"

"Nature has given us men sterner feelings, mein herr. I was born to the office I hold, taught to believe it right, if not honorable, and I have struggled hard to do its duties without murmuring. The case is different with poor Marguerite. She is a mother, and lives in her children; she has seen one that is near her heart publicly scorned, and she feels like a mother."

"And thou, who art a father, what has been thy manner of thinking under this insult?"

Balthazar was meek by nature, and, as he had just said, he had been trained to the exercise of his functions; but he was capable of profound affections. The question touched him in a sensitive spot, and he writhed under its

feelings ; but, accustomed to command himself before the public eye, and alive to the pride of manhood, his mighty effort to suppress the agony that loaded his heart was rewarded with success.

"Sorrow for my unoffending child ; sorrow for him who had forgotten his faith ; and sorrow for them who have been at the root of this bitter wrong," was the answer.

"This man has been accustomed to hear forgiveness preached to the criminal, and he turns his schooling to good account," whispered the wary judge to those near him. "We must try his guilt by other means. He may be readier in reply than steady in his nerves."

Signing to the assistants, the Valaisan now quietly awaited the effect of a new experiment. The pall was removed, and the body of Jacques Colis exposed. He was seated as in life, on the table in front of the grand altar.

"The innocent have no dread of those whose spirits have deserted the flesh," continued the châtelain, "but God often sorely pricks the consciences of the guilty, when they are made to see the works of their own cruel hands. Approach, and look upon the dead, Balthazar ; thou and thy wife, that we may judge of the manner in which ye face the murdered and wronged man."

A more fruitless experiment could not well have been attempted with one of the headsman's office ; for long familiarity with such sights had taken off that edge of horror which the less accustomed would be apt to feel. Whether it were owing to this circumstance, or to his innocence, Balthazar walked to the side of the body unshaken, and stood long regarding the bloodless features with unmoved tranquillity. His habits were quiet and meek, and little given to display. The feelings which crowded his mind, therefore, did not escape him in words, though a gleam of something like regret crossed his face. Not so with his companion. Marguerite took the hand of the dead man, and hot tears began to follow each other down her cheeks, as she gazed at his shrunken and altered lineaments.

"Poor Jacques Colis !" she said in a manner to be heard by all present ; "thou hadst thy faults, like all born of woman ; but thou didst not merit this ! Little did the mother that bore thee, and who lived in thy infant smile—she who fondled thee on her knee, and cherished thee in her bosom, foresee thy fearful and sudden end ! It was happy for her that she never knew the fruit of all her love,

and pains, and care, else bitterly would she have mourned over what was then her joy, and in sorrow would she have witnessed thy pleasantest smile. We live in a fearful world, Balthazar; a world in which the wicked triumph! Thy hand, that would not willingly harm the meanest creature which has been fashioned by the will of God, is made to take life, and thy heart—thy excellent heart—is slowly hardening in the execution of this accursed office! The judgment-seat hath fallen to the lot of the corrupt and designing; mercy hath become the laughing-stock of the ruthless, and death is inflicted by the hand of him who would live in peace with his kind. This cometh of thwarting God's intentions with the selfishness and designs of men! We would be wiser than he who made the universe, and we betray the weakness of fools! Go to—go to, ye proud and great of the earth—if we have taken life, it hath been at your bidding; but we have naught of this on our consciences. The deed hath been the work of the rapacious and violent—it is no deed of revenge.”

“In what manner are we to know that what thou sayest is true?” asked the châtelain, who had advanced near the altar, in order to watch the effects of the trial to which he had put Balthazar and his wife.

“I am not surprised at thy question, Herr Châtelain, for nothing comes quicker to the minds of the honored and happy than the thought of resenting an evil turn. It is not so with the despised. Revenge would be an idle remedy for us. Would it raise us in men's esteem? should we forget our own degraded position? should we be a whit nearer respect after the deed was done than we were before?”

“This may be true, but the angered do not reason. Thou art not suspected, Marguerite, except as having heard the truth from thy husband since the deed has been committed, but thine own discernment will show that naught is more probable than that a hot contention about the past may have led Balthazar, who is accustomed to see blood, into the commission of this act?”

“Here is thy boasted justice! Thine own laws are brought in support of thine own oppression. Didst thou know how much pains his father had in teaching Balthazar to strike, how many long and anxious visits were paid between his parent and mine in order to bring up the youth in the way of his dreadful calling, thou wouldst not think him so apt! God unfitted him for his office, as he had un-

fitted many of higher and different pretensions for duties that have been cast upon them in virtue of their birth-rights. Had it been I, châtelain, thy suspicions would have a better show of reason. I am formed with strong and quick feelings, and reason has often proved too weak for passion, though the rebuke that has been daily received throughout a life hath long since tamed all of pride that ever dwelt in me."

"Thou hast a daughter present?"

Marguerite pointed to the group which held her child.

"The trial is severe," said the Judge, who began to feel compunctions that were rare to one of his habits, "but it is as necessary to your own future peace, as it is to justice itself, that the truth should be known. I am compelled to order thy daughter to advance to the body."

Marguerite received this unexpected command with cold womanly reserve. Too much wounded to complain, but trembling for the conduct of her child, she went to the cluster of females, pressed Christine to her heart, and led her silently forward. She presented her to the châtelain, with a dignity so calm and quiet, that the latter found it oppressive!

"This is Balthazar's child," she said. Then folding her arms, she retired herself a step, an attentive observer of what passed.

The Judge regarded the sweet pallid face of the trembling girl with an interest he had seldom felt for any who had come before him in the discharge of his unbending duties. He spoke to her kindly, even encouragingly, placing himself intentionally between her and the dead, momentarily hiding the appalling spectacle from her view, that she might have time to summon her courage. Marguerite blessed him in her heart for this small grace, and was better satisfied.

"Thou wert betrothed to Jacques Colis?" demanded the châtelain, using a gentleness of voice that was singularly in contrast with his former stern interrogatories.

The utmost that Christine could reply was to bow her head.

"Thy nuptials were to take place at the late meeting of the Abbaye des Vignerons—it is our unpleasant duty to wound where we could wish to heal—but thy betrothed refused to redeem his pledge?"

"The heart is weak, and sometimes shrinks from its own

good purposes," murmured Christine. "He was but human, and he could not withstand the sneers of all about him."

The châtelain was so entranced by her gentle and sweet manner that he leaned forward to listen, lest a syllable of what she whispered might escape his ears.

"Thou acquittest, then, Jacques Colis of any false intention?"

"He was less strong than he believed himself, mein herr; he was not equal to sharing our disgrace, which was put rudely and too strongly before him."

"Thou hadst consented freely to the marriage thyself, and wert well disposed to become his wife?"

The imploring look and heaving respiration of Christine were lost on the blunted sensibilities of a criminal judge.

"Was the youth dear to thee?" he repeated, without perceiving the wound he was inflicting on female reserve.

Christine shuddered. She was not accustomed to have affections which she considered the most sacred of her short and innocent existence so rudely probed; but, believing that the safety of her father depended on her frankness and sincerity, by an effort that was nearly superhuman, she was enabled to reply. The bright glow that suffused her face, however, proclaimed the power of that sentiment which becomes instinctive to her sex, arraying her features in the lustre of maiden shame.

"I was little used to hear words of praise, Herr Châtelain,—and they are so soothing to the ears of the despised! I felt as a girl acknowledges the preference of a youth who is not disagreeable to her. I thought he loved me—and—and what would you more, mein herr?"

"None could hate thee, innocent and abused child!" murmured the Signor Grimaldi.

"You forget that I am Balthazar's daughter, mein herr; none of our race are viewed with favor."

"Thou, at least, must be an exception!"

"Leaving this aside," continued the châtelain, "I would know if thy parents showed resentment at the misconduct of thy betrothed; whether aught was said in thy presence that can throw light on this unhappy affair?"

The officer of the Valais turned his head aside, for he met the surprised and displeased glance of the Genoese.

whose eyes expressed a gentleman's opinion at hearing a child thus questioned in a matter that so nearly touched her father's life. But the look and the improper character of the examination escaped the notice of Christine. She relied with filial confidence on the innocence of the author of her being, and, so far from being shocked, she rejoiced with the simplicity and confidence of the undesigning, at being permitted to say anything that might vindicate him in the eyes of his judges.

"Herr Châtelain," she answered eagerly, the blood that had mounted to her cheeks from female weakness, deepening to, and warming her very temples with a holier sentiment: "Herr Châtelain, we wept together when alone; we prayed for our enemies as for ourselves, but naught was said to the prejudice of poor Jacques—no, not a whisper."

"Wept and prayed!" repeated the Judge, looking from the child to the father, in the manner of a man that fancied he did not hear aright.

"I said both, mein herr; if the former was a weakness, the latter was a duty."

"This is strange language in the mouth of a headsman's child!"

Christine appeared at a loss, for a moment, to comprehend his meaning; but, passing a hand across her fair brow, she continued:

"I think I understand what you would say, mein herr," she said; "the world believes us to be without feeling and without hope. We are what we seem in the eyes of others, because the law makes it so, but we are in our hearts like all around us, Herr Châtelain—with this difference, that, feeling our abasement among men, we lean more closely and more affectionately on God. You may condemn us to do your offices and to bear your dislike, but you cannot rob us of our trust in the justice of Heaven. In that, at least, we are the equals of the proudest Baron in the cantons!"

"The examination had better rest here," said the prior, advancing with glistening eyes to interpose between the maiden and her interrogator. "Thou knowest, Herr Bourrit, that we have other prisoners."

The châtelain, who felt his own practised obduracy of feeling strangely giving way before the innocent and guileless faith of Christine, was not unwilling himself to

change the direction of the inquiries. The family of Balthazar was directed to retire, and the attendants were commanded to bring forward Pippo and Conrad.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“ And when thou thus
Shalt stand impleaded at the high tribunal
Of hoodwinked Justice, who shall tell thy audit ? ”—COTTON.

THE buffoon and the pilgrim, though of a general appearance likely to excite distrust, presented themselves with the confidence and composure of innocence. Their examination was short, for the account they gave of their movements was clear and connected. Circumstances that were known to the monks too, greatly aided in producing a conviction that they could have had no agency in the murder. They had left the valley below some hours before the arrival of Jacques Colis, and they reached the convent, weary and foot-sore, as was usual with all who ascended that long and toilsome path, shortly after the commencement of the storm. Measures had been taken by the local authorities during the time lost in waiting the arrival of the bailiff and the châtelain, to ascertain all the minute facts which it was supposed would be useful in ferreting out the truth ; and the results of these inquiries had also been favorable to these itinerants, whose habits of vagabondism might otherwise very justly have brought them within the pale of suspicion.

The flippant Pippo was the principal speaker in the short investigation, and his answers were given with a ready frankness, that, under the circumstances, did him and his companion infinite service. The buffoon, though accustomed to deception and frauds, had sufficient mother wit to comprehend the critical position in which he now was placed, and that it was wiser to be sincere, than to attempt effecting his ends by any of the usual means of prevarication. He answered the Judge, therefore, with a simplicity which his ordinary pursuits would not have given reason to expect, and apparently with some touches of feeling that did credit to his heart.

“ This frankness is thy friend,” added the châtelain, after

he had nearly exhausted his questions, the answers having convinced him that there was no ground of suspicion, beyond the adventitious circumstance of their having been travellers on the same road as the deceased ; " it has done much toward convincing me of thy innocence, and it is in general the best shield for those who have committed no crime. I only marvel that one of thy habits should have had the sense to discover it ! "

" Suffer me to tell you, Signor Castellano, or Podestà, whichever may be your Eccellenza's proper title, that you have not given Pippo credit for the wit he really hath. It is true I live by throwing dust into men's eyes, and by making others think the wrong is the right ; but Mother Nature has given us all an insight into our own interests, and mine is quite clear enough to let me know when the true is better than the false."

" Happy would it be if all had the same faculty and the same disposition to put it in use."

" I shall not presume to teach one as wise and as experienced as yourself, Eccellenza, but if an humble man might speak freely in this honorable presence, he would say that it is not common to meet with a fact without finding it a very near neighbor to a lie. They pass for the wisest and the most virtuous who best know how to mix the two so artfully together, that, like the sweets we put upon healing bitters, the palatable may make the useful go down. Such at least is the opinion of a poor street buffoon, who has no better claim to merit than having learned his art on the Mole and in the Toledo of Bellissima Napoli, which, as everybody knows, is a bit of heaven fallen upon earth ! "

The fervor with which Pippo uttered the customary eulogium on the site of the ancient Parthenope, was so natural and characteristic as to excite a smile in the Judge, in spite of the solemn duty in which he was engaged, and it was believed to be an additional proof of the speaker's innocence. The châtelain then slowly recapitulated the history of the buffoon and the pilgrim to his companions, the purport of which was as follows.

Pippo naïvely admitted the debauch at Vévey, implicating the festivities of the day, and the known frailty of the flesh, as the two influencing causes. Conrad, however, stood upon the purity of his life, and the sacred character of his calling, justifying the company he kept on the re-

spectable plea of necessity, and on that of the mortifications to which a pilgrimage should, of right, subject him who undertakes it. They had quitted Vaud together as early as the evening of the day of the abbaye's ceremonies, and, from that time to the moment of their arrival at the convent, had made a diligent use of their legs, in order to cross the Col before the snows should set in and render the passage dangerous. They had been seen at Martigny, at Liddes, and St. Pierre, alone, and at proper hours, making the best of their way toward the hospice ; and, though of necessity their progress and actions for several hours after quitting the latter place, were not brought within the observation of any but of that all-seeing eye which commands a view of the recesses of the Alps equally with those of more frequented spots, their arrival at the abode of the monks was sufficiently seasonable to give reason to believe that no portion of the intervening time had been wasted by the way. Thus far, their account of themselves and their movements was distinct, while, on the other hand, there was not a single fact to implicate either, beyond the suspicion that was more or less common to all who happened to be on the mountain at the moment the crime was committed.

"The innocence of these two men would seem so clear, and their readiness to appear and answer to our questions is so much in their favor," observed the experienced châtelain, "that I do not deem it just to detain them longer. The pilgrim, in particular, has a heavy trust ; I understand he performs his penance as much for others as for himself, and it is scarce decent in us, who are believers and servants of the church, to place obstacles in his path. I will suggest the expediency, therefore, of giving him at least permission to depart."

"As we are near the end of the inquiries," interrupted the Signor Grimaldi, gravely, "I would suggest, with due deference to a better opinion and more experience, the propriety that all should remain, ourselves included, until we have come to a better understanding of the truth."

Both Pippo and the pilgrim met this suggestion with ready declarations of their willingness to continue at the convent until the following morning. This little concession, however, had no great merit, for the lateness of the hour rendered it imprudent to depart immediately ; and the affair was finally settled by ordering them to retire, it

being understood that unless previously called for, they might depart with the reappearance of the dawn. Maso was the next and last to be examined.

Il Maledetto presented himself with perfect steadiness of nerve. He was accompanied by Nettuno, the mastiffs of the convent having been kennelled for the night. It had been the habit of the dogs of late to stray among the rocks by day, and to return to the convent in the evening in quest of food, the sterile St. Bernard possessing nothing whatever for the support of man or beast, except that which came from the liberality of the monks, every animal but the chamois and the l  mmergeyer refusing to ascend so near the region of eternal snows. In his master, however, Nettuno found a steady friend, never failing to receive all that was necessary to his wants from the portion of Maso himself ; for the faithful beast was admitted at his periodical visits to the temporary prison in which the latter was confined.

The ch  telain waited a moment for the little stir occasioned by the entrance of the prisoner to subside, when he pursued the inquiry.

"Thou art a Genoese of the name of Thomaso Santi ?" he asked, consulting his notes.

"By this name, signore, am I generally known."

"Thou art a mariner, and it is said one of courage and skill. Why hast thou given thyself the ungracious appellation of Il Maledetto ?"

"Men call me thus. It is a misfortune, not a crime, to be accursed."

"He that is so ready to abuse his own fortunes, should not be surprised if others are led to think he merits his fate. We have some accounts of thee in Valais ; 'tis said thou art a freetrader ?"

"The fact can little concern Valais or her Government, since all come and go unquestioned in this free land."

"It is true, we do not imitate our neighbors in all their policy ; neither do we like to see so often those who set at naught the laws of friendly States. Why art thou journeying on this road ?"

"Signore, if I am what you say, the reason of my being here is sufficiently plain. It is probably because the Lombard and the Piedmontese are more exacting of the stranger than you of the mountains."

"Your effects have been examined, and they offer nothing to support the suspicion. By all appearances, Maso, thou hast not much of the goods of life to boast of ; but in spite of this, thy reputation clings to thee."

"Aye, signore, this is much after the world's humor. Let it fancy any quality in a man, and he is sure to get more than his share of the same, whether it be for or against his interest. The rich man's florin is quickly coined into a sequin by vulgar tongues, while the poor man is lucky if he can get the change of a silver mark for an ounce of the better metal. Even poor Nettuno finds it difficult to get a living here at the convent, because some difference in coat and instinct has given him a bad name among the dogs of St. Bernard !"

"Thy answer agrees with thy character ; thou art said to have more wit than honesty, Maso, and thou art described as one that can form a desperate resolution, and act up to its decision at need ?"

"I am as Heaven willed at the birth, Signor Castellano, and as the chances of a pretty busy life have served to give the work its finish. That I am not wanting in manly qualities, on occasion, perhaps these noble travellers will be willing to testify, in consideration of some activity that I may have shown on the Leman, during their late passage of that treacherous water."

Though this was said carelessly, the appeal to the recollection and gratitude of those he had served, was too direct to be overlooked. Melchior de Willading, the pious clavier, and the Signor Grimaldi, all testified in behalf of the prisoner, freely admitting that, without his coolness and skill, the Winkelried and all she held would irretrievably have been lost. Sigismund was not content with so cold a demonstration of his feelings. He owed not only the lives of his father and himself to the courage of Maso, but that of one dearer than all ; one whose preservation, to his youthful imagination, seemed a service that might nearly atone for any crime, and his gratitude was in proportion.

"I will testify more strongly to thy merit, Maso, in face of this or any tribunal," he said, grasping the hand of the Italian. "One who showed so much bravery and so strong love for his fellows, would be little likely to take life clandestinely and like a coward. Thou mayest count on my testimony in this strait—if thou art guilty of this crime, who can hope to be innocent ?"

Maso returned the friendly grasp till their fingers seemed to grow into each other. His eye, too, showed he was not without wholesome native sympathies, though education and his habits might have warped them from their true direction. A tear, in spite of his effort to suppress the weakness, started from its fountain, rolling down his sunburnt cheek like a solitary rivulet trickling through a barren and rugged waste.

"This is frank, and as becomes a soldier, signore," he said, "and I receive it as it is given, in kindness and love. But we will not lay more stress upon the affair of the lake than it deserves. This keen-sighted châtelain need not be told that I could not be of use in saving your lives, without saving my own; and, unless I much mistake the meaning of his eye, he is about to say that we are fashioned like this wild country in which chance has brought us together, with our spots of generous fertility mingled with much unfruitful rock, and that he who does a good act to-day may forget himself by doing an evil turn to-morrow."

"Thou givest reason to all who hear thee, to mourn that thy career has not been more profitable to thyself and the public," answered the Judge. "One who can reason so well, and who hath this clear insight into his own disposition, must err less from ignorance than wantonness!"

"There you do me injustice, Signor Castellano, and the laws more credit than they deserve. I shall not deny that justice—or what is called justice—and I have some acquaintance. I have been the tenant of many prisons before this which has been furnished by the holy canons, and I have seen every stage of the rogue's progress, from him who is startled by his first crime, dreaming heavy dreams, and fancying each stone in his cellar has an eye to reproach him, to him who no sooner does a wrong than it is forgotten in the wish to find the means of committing another, and I call Heaven as a witness, that more is done to help along the scholar in his study of vice, by those who are styled the ministers of justice, than by his own natural frailties, the wants of his habits, or the strength of his passions. Let the Judge feel a father's mildness, the laws possess that pure justice which is of things that are not perverted, and society become what it claims to be, a community of mutual support, and my life on it, châtelain,

thy functions will be lessened of most of their weight and of all their oppression."

"This language is bold, and without an object. Explain the manner of thy quitting Vévey, Maso, the road thou hast travelled, the hours of thy passages by the different villages and the reason why thou wert discovered near the Refuge, alone, and why thou quittedst the companions with whom thou hadst passed the night so early, and so clandestinely?"

The Italian listened attentively to these several interrogatories; when they were all put, he gravely and calmly set about furnishing his answers. The history of his departure from Vévey, his appearance at St. Maurice, Martigny, Liddes, and St. Pierre, was distinctly given, and it was in perfect accordance with the private information that had been gleaned by the authorities. He had passed the last habitation on the mountain, on foot and alone, about an hour before the solitary horseman, who was now known to be Jacques Colis, was seen to proceed in the same direction, and he admitted that he was overtaken by the latter, just as he reached the upper extremity of the plain beneath Velan, where they were seen in company, though at a considerable distance, and by a doubtful light, by the travellers who were conducted by Pierre.

Thus far the account given of himself by Maso was in perfect conformity with what was already known to the châtelain; but, after turning the rock already mentioned in a previous chapter, all was buried in mystery, with the exception of the incidents that have been regularly related in the narrative. The Italian, in his further explanations, added that he soon parted with his companion, who, impatient of delay, and desirous of reaching the convent before night, had urged his beast to greater speed, while he himself had turned a little aside from the path to rest himself, and to make a few preparations that he had deemed necessary before going directly to the convent.

The whole of this short history was delivered with a composure as great as that which had just been displayed by Pippo and the pilgrim, and it was impossible for any present to detect the slightest improbability or contradiction in the tale. The meeting with the other travellers in the storm Maso ascribed to the fact of their having passed him while he was stationary, and to his greater speed when

in motion, two circumstances that were quite as likely to be true as all the rest of the account. He had left the Refuge at the first glimpse of dawn, because he was behind his time, and it had been his intention to descend to Aoste that night, an exertion that was necessary in order to repair the loss.

"This may be true," resumed the Judge; "but how dost thou account for thy poverty? In searching thy effects, thou art found to be in a condition little better than that of a mendicant. Even thy purse is empty, though known to be a successful and desperate trifler with the revenue in all those States where the entrance duty is enforced."

"He that plays deepest, signore, is most likely to be stripped of his means. What is there new or unlooked for in the fact that a dealer in the contraband should lose his venture?"

"This is more plausible than convincing. Thou art signalled as being accustomed to transport articles of the jewellers from Geneva into the adjoining States, and thou art known to come from the headquarters of these artisans. Thy losses must have been unusual, to have left thee so naked. I much fear that a bootless speculation in thy usual trade has driven thee to repair the loss by the murder of this unhappy man, who left his home well supplied with gold, and, as it would seem, with a valuable store of jewelry too. The particulars are especially mentioned in this written account of his effects, which the honorable bailiff bringeth from his friends."

Maso mused silently and in deep abstraction. He then desired that the chapel might be cleared of all but the travellers of condition, the monks, and his judges. The request was granted; for it was expected that he was about to make an important confession, as indeed, in a certain degree, proved to be the fact.

"Should I clear myself of the charge of poverty, Signor Castellano," he demanded, when all the inferiors had left the place, "shall I stand acquitted in your eyes of the charge of murder?"

"Surely not; still thou wilt have removed one of the principal grounds of temptation, and in that thou wilt be greatly the gainer, for we know that Jacques Colis hath been robbed as well as slain."

Maso appeared to deliberate again, as a man is apt to pause before he takes a step that may materially affect his

interests. But suddenly deciding, like a man of prompt opinions, he called to Nettuno, and, seating himself on the steps of one of the side-altars, he proceeded to make his revelation with great method and coolness. Removing some of the long shaggy hair of the dog, Il Maledetto showed the attentive and curious spectators that a belt of leather had been ingeniously placed about the body of the animal, next its skin. It was so concealed as to be quite hid from the view of those who did not make particular search, a process that Nettuno, judging by the scowling looks he threw at most present, and the manner in which he showed his teeth, would not be likely to permit to a stranger. The belt was opened, and Maso laid a glittering necklace of precious stones, in which rubies and emeralds vied with other gems of price, with some of a dealer's coquetry, under the strong light of the lamp.

"There you see the fruits of a life of hazards and hardships, Signor Châtelain," he said; "if my purse is empty it is because the Jewish Calvinists of Geneva have taken the last liard in payment of the jewels."

"This is an ornament of rare beauty and exceeding value, to be seen in the possession of one of thy appearance and habits, Maso!" exclaimed the frugal Valaisan.

"Signore, its cost was a hundred doppie of pure gold and full weight, and it is contracted for with a young noble of Milano, who hopes to win his mistress by the present, for a profit of fifty. Affairs were getting low with me in consequence of sundry seizures and a total wreck, and I took the adventure with the hope of sudden and great gain. As there is nothing against the laws of Valais in the matter, I trust to stand acquitted, châtelain, for my frankness. One who was master of this would be little likely to shed blood for the trifle that would be found on the person of Jacques Colis."

"Thou hast more," observed the Judge, signing with his hand as he spoke; "let us see all thou hast."

"Not a brooch, or so much as a worthless garnet."

"Nay, I see the belt which contains them among the hairs of the dog."

Maso either felt or feigned a well-acted surprise. Nettuno had been placed in a convenient attitude for his master to unloosen the belt, and, as it was the intention of the latter to replace it, the animal still lay quietly in the same position, a circumstance which displaced his shaggy coat,

and allowed the châtelain to detect the object to which he had just alluded.

"Signore," said the smuggler, changing color, but endeavoring to speak lightly of a discovery which all the others present evidently considered to be grave, "it would seem that the dog, accustomed to do these little offices in behalf of his master, has been tempted by success to undertake a speculation on his own account. By my patron saint and the Virgin ! I know nothing of this second adventure."

"Trifle not, but undo the belt, lest I have the beast muzzled that it may be performed by others," sternly commanded the châtelain.

The Italian complied, though with an ill grace that was much too apparent for his own interest. Having loosened the fastenings, he reluctantly gave the envelope to the Valaisan. The latter cut the cloth, and laid some ten or fifteen different pieces of jewelry on the table. The spectators crowded about the spot in curiosity, while the Judge eagerly referred to the written description of the effects of the murdered man.

"A ring of brilliants, with an emerald of price, the setting chaste and heavy," read the Valaisan.

"Thank God, it is not here !" exclaimed the Signor Grimaldi. "One could wish to find so true a mariner innocent of this bloody deed !"

The châtelain believed he was on the scent of a secret that had begun to perplex him, and as few are so inherently humane as to prefer the advantage of another to their own success, he heard both the announcement and the declaration of the noble Genoese with a frown.

"A cross of turquoise of the length of two inches, with pearls of no great value intermixed," continued the Judge.

Sigismund groaned and turned away from the table.

"Unhappily, here is that which too well answers the description !" slowly and with evident reluctance, escaped from the Signor Grimaldi.

"Let it be measured," demanded the prisoner.

The experiment was made, and the agreement was found to be perfect.

"Bracelets of rubies, the stones set in foil, and six in number," continued the methodical châtelain, whose eye now lighted with the triumph of victory.

"These are wanting !" cried Melchior de Willading, who,

in common with all whom he had served, took a lively interest in the fate of Maso. "There are no jewels of this description here!"

"Come to the next, Herr Châtelain," put in Peterchen, leaning to the side of the law's triumph; "let us have the next, o' God's name!"

"A brooch of amethyst, the stone of our own mountains, set in foil, and the size of one-eighth of an inch; form oval."

It was lying on the table, beyond all possibility of dispute. All the remaining articles, which were chiefly rings of the less prized stones, such as jasper, garnet, topaz, and turquoise, were also identified, answering perfectly to the description furnished by the jeweller, who had sold them to Jacques Colis the night of the fête, when, with Swiss thrift, he had laid in this small stock in trade, with a view to diminish the cost of his intended journey.

"It is a principle of law, unfortunate man," remarked the châtelain, removing the spectacles he had mounted in order to read the list, "that effects wrongly taken from one robbed criminales him in whose possession they are found, unless he can render a clear account of the transfer. What hast thou to say on this head?"

"Not a syllable, signore; I must refer you and all others to the dog, who alone can furnish the history of these bawbles. It is clear that I am little known in the Valais, for Maso never deals in trifles insignificant as these."

"The pretext will not serve thee, Maso; thou triflest in an affair of life and death. Wilt thou confess thy crime, ere we proceed to extremities?"

"That I have been long at open variance with the law. Signor Castellano, is true, if you will have it so; but I am as innocent of this man's death as the noble Baron de Willading here. That the Genoese authorities were looking for me, on account of some secret understanding that the republic has with its old enemies, the Savoyards, I frankly allow, too; but it was a matter of gain, and not of blood. I have taken life in my time, signore, but it has been in fair combat, whether the cause was just or not."

"Enough has been proved against thee already to justify the use of the torture in order to have the rest."

"Nay, I do not see the necessity of this appeal," remarked the bailiff. "There lies the dead, here is his property, and yonder stands the criminal. It is an affair that

only wants the forms, methinks, to be committed presently to the axe."

"Of all the foul offences against God and man," resumed the Valaisan, in the manner of one that is about to sentence, "that which hastens a living soul, unshrived, unconfessed, unprepared, and with all its sins upon it, into another state of being, and into the dread presence of his Almighty Judge, is the heaviest, and the last to be overlooked by the law. There is less excuse for thee, Thomaso Santi, for thy education has been far superior to thy fortunes, and thou hast passed a life of vice and violence in opposition to thy reason and what was taught thee in youth. Thou hast, therefore, little ground for hope, since the State I serve loves justice in its purity above all other qualities."

"Nobly spoken, Herr Châtelain," cried the bailiff, "and in a manner to send repentance like a dagger into the criminal's soul. What is thought and said in Valais we echo in Vaud, and I would not that any I love stood in thy shoes, Maso, for the honors of the Emperor!"

"Signori, you have both spoken, and it is as men whom fortune hath favored since childhood. It is easy for those who are in prosperity to be upright in all that touches money, though by the light of the blessed Maria's countenance! I do think there is more coveted by those who have much than by the hardy and industrious poor. I am no stranger to that which men call justice, and know how to honor and respect its decrees as they deserve. Justice, signori, is the weak man's scourge and the strong man's sword; it is a breast-plate and back-plate to the one and a weapon to be parried by the other. In short, it is a word of fair import on the tongue, but of most unequal application in the deed."

"We overlook thy language in consideration of the pass to which thy crimes have reduced thee, unhappy man, though it is an aggravation of thy offences, since it proves thou hast sinned equally against thyself and us. This affair need go no further; the headsman and the other travellers may be dismissed; we commit the Italian to the irons."

Maso heard the order without alarm, though he appeared to be maintaining a violent struggle with himself. He paced the chapel rapidly, and muttered much between his teeth. His words were not intelligible, though they

were evidently of strong, if not violent, import. At length he stopped short, in the manner of one who had decided.

"This matter grows serious," he said; "it will admit of no further hesitation. Signor Grimaldi, command all to leave the chapel in whose discretion you have not the most perfect confidence."

"I see none to be distrusted," answered the surprised Genoese.

"Then will I speak."

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Thy voice to us is wind among still woods."—SHELLEY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the gravity of the facts which were accumulating against him, Maso had maintained throughout the foregoing scene much of that steady self-possession and discernment which were the fruits of adventure in scenes of danger, long exposure and multiplied hazards. To these causes of coolness might be added the iron-like nerves inherited from nature. The latter were not easily disturbed, however critical the state to which he was reduced. Still he had changed color, and his manner had that thoughtful and unsettled air which denotes the consciousness of being in circumstances that require uncommon wariness and judgment. But his final opinion appeared to be formed when he made the appeal mentioned in the close of the last chapter, and he now only waited for the two or three officials who were present to retire, before he pursued his purpose. When the door was closed, leaving none but his examiners, Sigismund, Balthazar, and the group of females in the side chapel, he turned with singular respect of manner, and addressed himself exclusively to the Signor Grimaldi, as if the judgment which was to decide his fate depended solely on his will.

"Signore," he said, "there has been much secret allusion between us, and I suppose that it is unnecessary for me to say that you are known to me."

"I have already recognized thee for a countryman," coldly returned the Genoese; "it is in vain, however, to imagine the circumstance can avail a murderer. If any consideration could induce me to forget the claims of justice,

the recollection of thy good service on the Leman would prove thy best friend. As it is, I fear thou hast naught to expect from me."

Maso was silent. He looked the other steadily in the face, as if he would study his character, though he guardedly prevented his manner from losing its appearance of profound respect.

"Signore, the chances of life were greatly with you at the birth. You were born the heir of a powerful house, in which gold is more plenty than woes in a poor man's cabin, and you have not been made to learn by experience how hard it is to keep down the longings for those pleasures which the base metal will purchase, when we see others rolling in its luxuries."

"This plea will not avail thee, unfortunate man; else were there an end of human institutions. The difference of which thou speakest is a simple consequence of the rights of property; and even the barbarian admits the sacred duty of respecting that which is another's."

"A word from one like you, illustrious signore, would open for me the road to Piedmont," continued Maso, unmoved; "once across the frontiers, it shall be my care never to molest the rocks of Valais again. I ask only what I have been the means of saving, Eccellenza—life."

The Signor Grimaldi shook his head, though it was very evident that he declined the required intercession with much reluctance. He and old Melchior de Willading exchanged glances; and all who noted this silent intercourse understood it to say, that each considered duty to God a higher obligation than gratitude for a service rendered to themselves.

"Ask gold, or what thou wilt else, but do not ask me to aid in defeating justice. Gladly would I have given for the asking, twenty times the value of those miserable bawbles for whose possession, Maso, thou hast rashly taken life; but I cannot become a sharer of thy crime, by refusing atonement for his friends. It is too late; I cannot befriend thee now, if I would."

"Thou hearest the answer of this noble gentleman," interposed the châtelain; "it is wise and seemly, and thou greatly overratest his influence or that of any present, if thou fanciest the laws can be set aside at pleasure. Wert thou a noble thyself, or the son of a prince, judgment would have its way in the Valais!"

Maso smiled wildly ; and yet the expression of his glittering eye was so ironical as to cause uneasiness in his judge. The Signor Grimaldi, too, observed the audacious confidence of his air with distrust, for his spirit had taken secret alarm on a subject that was rarely long absent from his thoughts.

"If thou meanest more than has been said," exclaimed the latter, "for the sake of the blessed Maria be explicit !"

"Signor Melchior," continued Maso, turning to the Baron, "I did you and your daughter fair service on the lake !"

"That thou didst, Maso, we are both willing to admit, and were it in Berne,—but the laws are made equally for all, the great and the humble, they who have friends, and they who have none."

"I have heard of this act on the lake," put in Peterchen ; "and unless fame lieth—which, Heaven knows, fame is apt enough to do, except in giving their just dues to those who are in high trust,—thou didst conduct thyself in that affair, Maso, like a loyal and well-taught mariner ; but the honorable châtelain has well remarked, that holy justice must have way before all other things. Justice is represented as blind, in order that it may be seen she is no respecter of persons : and wert thou an Avoyer, the decree must come. Reflect maturely, therefore, on all the facts, and thou wilt come, in time, to see the impossibility of thine own innocence. First, thou left the path, being ahead of Jacques Colis, to enter it at a moment suited to thy purposes : then thou tookest his life for gold——"

"But this is believing that to be true, Signor Bailiff, which is only yet supposed," interrupted Il Maledetto ; "I left the path to give Nettuno his charge apart from curious eyes ; and, as for the gold of which you speak, would the owner of a necklace of that price be apt to barter his soul against a booty like this which comes of Jacques Colis !"

Maso spoke with a contempt which did not serve his cause ; for it left the impression among the auditors, that he weighed the morality and immorality of his acts simply by their result.

"It is time to bring this to an end," said the Signor Grimaldi, who had been thoughtful and melancholy while the others spoke ; "thou hast something to address particularly to me, Maso ; but if thy claim is no better than that

of our common country, I grieve to say it cannot be admitted."

"Signor, the voice of a Doge of Genoa is not often raised in vain, when he would use it in behalf of another!"

At this sudden announcement of the traveller's rank, the monks of the châtelain started in surprise, and a low murmur of wonder was heard in the chapel. The smile of Peterchen, and the composure of the Baron de Willading, however, showed that they at least had learned nothing new. The bailiff whispered the prior significantly, and from that moment his deportment toward the Genoese took still more of the character of formal and official respect. On the other hand, the Signor Grimaldi remained composed, like one accustomed to receive deference, though his manner lost the slight degree of restraint that had been imposed by the observance of the temporary character he had assumed.

"The voice of a Doge of Genoa should not be used in intercession, unless in behalf of the innocent," he replied, keeping his severe eye fastened on the countenance of the accused.

Again Il Maledetto seemed laboring with some secret that struggled on his tongue.

"Speak," continued the Prince of Genoa; for it was, in truth, that high functionary, who had journeyed incognito, in the hope of meeting his ancient friend at the sports of Vévey. "Speak, Maso, if thou hast aught serious to urge in favor of thyself; time presses, and the sight of one to whom I owe so much in this great jeopardy, without the power to aid him, grows painful."

"Signor Doge, though deaf to pity, you cannot be deaf to nature."

The countenance of the Doge became livid; his lips trembled even to the appearance of convulsions.

"Deal no longer in mystery, man of blood!" he said with energy. "What is thy meaning?"

"I entreat your Eccellenza to be calm. Necessity forces me to speak; for, as you see, I stand between this revelation and the block—I am Bartoldo Contini!"

The groan that escaped the compressed lips of the Doge, the manner in which he sank into a seat, and the hue of death that settled over his aged countenance, until it was more ghastly even than that of the unhappy victim of violence, drew all present, in wonder and alarm, around his

chair. Signing for those who pressed upon him to give way, the Prince sat gazing at Maso, with eyes that appeared ready to burst from their sockets.

"Thou Bartolomeo!" he uttered huskily, as if horror had frozen his voice.

"I am Bartolo, Signor, and no other. He who goes through many scenes hath occasion for many names. Even your Highness travels at times under a cloud."

The Doge continued to stare on the speaker with the fixedness of regard that one might be supposed to fasten on a creature of unearthly existence.

"Melchior," he said slowly, turning his eyes from one to the other of the forms that filled them, for Sigismund had advanced to the side of Maso, in kind concern for the old man's condition,—*"Melchior, we are but feeble and miserable creatures in the hand of one who looks upon the proudest and happiest of us, as we look upon the worm that crawls the earth! What are hope, and honor, and our fondest love, in the great train of events that time heaves from its womb, bringing forth to our confusion? Are we proud? fortune revenges itself for our want of humility by its scorn. Are we happy? it is but the calm that precedes the storm. Are we great? it is but to lead us into abuses that will justify our fall. Are we honored? stains tarnish our good names, in spite of all our care!"*

"He who puts his trust in the Son of Maria need never despair!" whispered the worthy clavier, touched nearly to tears by the sudden distress of one whom he had learned to respect. "Let the fortunes of the world pass away, or change as they will, his chastening love outliveth time!"

The Signor Grimaldi, for, though the elected of Genoa, such was in truth the family name of the Doge, turned his vacant gaze for an instant on the Augustine, but it soon reverted to the forms and faces of Maso and Sigismund, who still stood before him, filling his thoughts even more than his sight.

"Yes, there is a power," he resumed, "a great and beneficent Being to equalize our fortunes here, and when we pass into another state of being, loaded with the wrongs of this, we shall have justice! Tell me, Melchior, thou who knew my youth, who read my heart when it was open as day, what was there in it to deserve this punishment? Here is Balthazar, come of a race of executioners—a man condemned of opinion—that prejudice besets with a hedge

of hatred—that men point at with their fingers, and whom the dogs are ready to bay—this Balthazar is the father of that gallant youth, whose form is so perfect, whose spirit is so noble, and whose life so pure ; while I, the last of a line that is lost in the obscurity of time, the wealthiest of my land, and the chosen of my peers, am accursed with an outcast, a common brigand, a murderer, for the sole prop of my decaying house—with this *Il Maledetto*—this man accursed—for a son !”

A movement of astonishment escaped the listeners, even the Baron de Willading not suspecting the real cause of his friend's distress. Maso alone was unmoved ; for while the aged father betrayed the keenness of his anguish, the son discovered none of that sympathy of which even a life like his might be supposed to have left some remains in the heart of a child. He was cold, collected, observant, and master of his smallest action.

“I will not believe this,” exclaimed the Doge, whose very soul revolted at this unfeeling apathy, even more than at the disgrace of being the father of such a child ; “thou art not he thou pretendest to be : this foul lie is uttered that my natural feelings may interpose between thee and the block ! Prove thy truth, or I abandon thee to thy fate.”

“Signore, I would have saved this unhappy exhibition, but you would not. That I am Bartolo this signet, your own gift sent to be my protection in a strait like this, will show. It is, moreover, easy for me to prove what I say, by a hundred witnesses who are living in Genoa.”

The Signor Grimaldi stretched forth a hand that trembled like an aspen to receive the ring, a jewel of little price, but a signet that he had, in truth, sent to be an instrument of recognition between him and his child, in the event of any sudden calamity befalling the latter. He groaned as he gazed at its well-remembered emblems, for its identity was only too plain.

“Maso—Bartolo—Gaetano—for such, miserable boy, is thy real appellation—thou canst not know how bitter is the pang that an unworthy child brings to the parent, else would thy life have been different. Oh ! Gaetano ! Gaetano ! what a foundation art thou for a father's hopes ! What a subject for a father's love ! I saw thee last a smiling innocent cherub, in thy nurse's arms, and I find thee with a blighted soul, the pure fountain of thy mind corrupted, a form sealed with the stamp of vice, and with hands dyed

in blood ; prematurely old in body, and with a spirit that hath already the hellish taint of the damned ! ”

“ Signore, you find me as the chances of a wild life have willed. The world and I have been at loggerheads this many a year, and in trifling with its laws, I take my revenge of its abuse—” warmly returned *Il Maledetto*, for his spirit began to be aroused. “ Thou bear’st hard upon me, Doge—father—or what thou wilt—and I should be little worthy of my lineage, did I not meet thy charges as they are made. Compare thine own career with mine, and let it be proclaimed by sound of trumpet if thou wilt, which hath most reason to be proud, and which to exult. Thou wert reared in the hopes and honors of our name ; thou passed thy youth in the pursuit of arms according to thy fancy, and when tired of change, and willing to narrow thy pleasures, thou looked about thee for a maiden to become the mother of thy successor ; thou turned a wishing eye on one young, fair, and noble, but whose affections, as her faith, were solemnly, irretrievably plighted to another.”

The doge shuddered and veiled his eyes ; but he eagerly interrupted Maso.

“ Her kinsman was unworthy of her love,” he cried ; “ he was an outcast, and little better than thyself, unhappy boy, except in the chances of condition.”

“ It matters not, signore ; God had not made you the arbiter of her fate. In tempting her family by your greater riches, you crushed two hearts, and destroyed the hopes of your fellow creatures. In her was sacrificed an angel, mild and pure as this fair creature who is now listening so breathlessly to my words ; in him a fierce untamed spirit, that had only the greater need of management, since it was as likely to go wrong as right. Before your son was born, this unhappy rival, poor in hopes as in wealth, had become desperate ; and the mother of your child sank a victim to her ceaseless regrets, at her own want of faith as much as for his follies.”

“ Thy mother was deluded, Gaetano ; she never knew the real qualities of her cousin, or a soul like hers would have loathed the wretch.”

“ Signore, it matters not,” continued *Il Maledetto*, with a ruthless perseverance of intention, and a coolness of manner that would seem to merit the description which had just been given his spirit, that of possessing a hellish taint. “ She loved him with a woman’s heart ; and with a

woman's ingenuity and confidence, she ascribed his fall to despair for her loss."

"Oh, Melchior! Melchior! this is fearfully true!" groaned the Doge.

"It is so true, signore, that it should be written on my mother's tomb. We are children of a fiery climate; the passions burn in our Italy like the hot sun that glows there. When despair drove the disappointed lover to acts that rendered him an outlaw, the passage to revenge was short. Your child was stolen, hid from your view, and cast upon the world under circumstances that left little doubt of his living in bitterness, and dying under the contempt, if not the curses, of his fellows. All this, Signor Grimaldi, is the fruit of your own errors. Had you respected the affections of an innocent girl, the sad consequences to yourself and me might have been avoided."

"Is this man's history to be believed, Gaetano?" demanded the Baron, who had more than once betrayed a wish to check the rude tongue of the speaker.

"I do not—I cannot deny it; I never saw my own conduct in this criminal light before, and yet now it all seems frightfully true."

Il Maledetto laughed. Those around him thought his untimely merriment resembled the mockery of a devil.

"This is the manner in which men continue to sin, while they lay claim to the merit of innocence!" he added. "Let the great of the earth give but half the care to prevent, that they show to punish, offences against themselves, and what is now called justice will no longer be a stalking-horse to enable a few to live at the cost of the rest. As for me, I am proof of what noble blood and illustrious ancestry can do for themselves! Stolen when a child, Nature has had fair play in my temperament, which I own is more disposed to wild adventure and manly risks than to the pleasures of marble halls. Noble father of mine, were this spirit dressed up in the guise of a senator, or a Doge, it might fare badly with Genoa!"

"Unfortunate man," exclaimed the indignant prior, "is this language for a child to use to his father? Dost thou forget that the blood of Jacques Colis is on thy soul?"

"Holy Augustine, the candor with which my general frailties are allowed, should gain me credit when I speak

of particular accusations. By the hopes and piety of the reverend canon of Aoste, thy patron saint and founder, I am guiltless of this crime. Question Nettuno as you will, or turn the affair in every way that usage warrants, and let appearances take what shape they may, I swear to you my innocence. If you think that fear of punishment tempts me to utter a lie under these holy appeals (he crossed himself with reverence), ye do injustice both to my courage and to my love of the saints. The only son of the reigning Doge of Genoa has little to fear from the headsman's blow!"

Again Maso laughed. It was the confidence of one who knew the world, and was too audacious even to consult appearances unless it suited his humor, breaking out in very wantonness. A man who had led his life, was not to learn at this late day, that the want of eyes in Justice oftener means blindness to the faults of the privileged, than the impartiality that is assumed by the pretending emblem. The châtelain, the prior, the bailiff, the clavier, and the Baron de Willading, looked at each other like men bewildered. The mental agony of the Doge formed a contrast so frightful with the heartless and cruel insensibility of the son, that the sight chilled their blood. The sentiment was only the more common, from the silent but general conviction that the unfeeling criminal must be permitted to escape. There was, indeed, no precedent for leading the child of a prince to the block, unless it was for an offence which touched the preservation of the father's interests. Much was said in maxims and apothegms of the purity and necessity of rigid impartiality in administering the affairs of life, but neither had attained his years and experience without obtaining glimpses of practical things, that taught them to foresee the impunity of Maso. Too much violence would be done to a factitious and tottering edifice, were it known that a prince's son was no better than one of the vilest, and the lingering feelings of paternity were certain at last to cast a shield before the offender.

The embarrassment and doubt attending such a state of things was happily, but quite unexpectedly, relieved by the interference of Balthazar. The headsman, until this moment, had been a silent and attentive listener to all that passed; but now he pressed himself into the circle, and looking, in his quiet manner, from one to the other, he

spoke with the assurance that the certainty of having important intelligence to impart, is apt to give even to the meekest, in the presence of those whom they habitually respect.

"This broken tale of Maso," he said, "is removing a cloud that has lain for nearly thirty years before my eyes. Is it true, illustrious Doge, for such it appears is your princely state, that a son of your noble stock was stolen and kept in secret from your love, through the vindictive enmity of a rival?"

"True!—alas, too true! Would it had pleased the blessed Maria, who so cherished his mother, to call his spirit to Heaven, ere the curse befell him and me."

"Your pardon, great Prince, if I press you with questions at a moment so painful. But it is in your own interest. Suffer that I may ask in what year this calamity befell your family?"

The Signor Grimaldi signed for his friend to assume the office of answering these extraordinary interrogatories, while he buried his own venerable face in his cloak, to conceal his anguish from curious eyes. Melchior Willading regarded the headsman in surprise; for an instant he was disposed to repel questions that seemed importunate; but the earnest countenance, and mild, decent demeanor of Balthazar, overcame his repugnance to pursue the subject.

"The child was seized in the autumn of the year 1693," he answered, his previous conferences with his friend having put him in possession of all the leading facts of the history.

"And his age?"

"Was near a twelvemonth."

"Can you inform me what became of the profligate noble who committed this foul robbery?"

"The fate of the Signor Pantaleone Serrani has never been truly known; though there is a dark rumor that he died in a brawl in our own Switzerland. That he is dead there is no cause to doubt."

"And his person, noble Freiherr—a description of his person is now only wanting to throw the light of a noon-day sun on what has so long been night!"

"I knew the unlucky Signor Pantaleone well in early youth. At the time mentioned his years might have been thirty, his form was seemly and of middle height, his

features bore the Italian outline, with the dark eye, swarthy skin, and glossy hair of the climate. More than this, with the exception of a finger lost in one of our affairs in Lombardy, I cannot say."

"This is enough," returned the attentive Balthazar. "Dismiss your grief, princely Doge, and prepare your heart for a new-found joy. Instead of being the parent of this reckless freebooter, God at length pities and returns your real son in Sigismund, a child that might gladden the heart of any parent, though he were an emperor!"

This extraordinary declaration was made to stunned and confounded listeners. A cry of alarm burst from the lips of Marguerite, who approached the group in the centre of the chapel, trembling and anxious, as if the grave were about to rob her of a treasure.

"What is this I hear!" exclaimed the mother, whose sensitiveness was the first to take alarm. "Are my half-formed suspicions, then, too true, Balthazar? Am I, indeed, without a son? I know thou wouldst not trifle with a mother, or mislead this stricken noble in a thing like this! Speak again, that I may know the truth—Sigismund——"

"Is not our child," answered the headsman, with an impress of truth in his manner that went far to bring conviction; "our own boy died in that blessed state of infancy, and, to save thy feelings, this youth was substituted in his place by me without thy knowledge."

Marguerite moved nearer to the young man. She gazed wistfully at his flushed, excited features, in which pain at being so unexpectedly torn from the bosom of a family he had always deemed his own, was fearfully struggling with a wild and indefinite delight at finding himself suddenly relieved from a load he had long found so grievous to be borne. Interpreting the latter expression with jealous affection, she bent her face to her bosom, and retreated in silence among her companions to weep.

In the meantime a sudden and tumultuous surprise took possession of the different listeners, which was modified and exhibited according to their respective characters, as to the amount of interest that each had in the truth or falsehood of what had just been announced. The Doge clung to the hope, improbable as it seemed, with a tenacity proportioned to his recent anguish, while Sigismund stood like one beside himself. His eye wandered from the sim-

ple and benevolent, but degraded man, whom he had believed to be his father, to the venerable and imposing-looking noble who was now so unexpectedly presented in that sacred character. The sobs of Marguerite reached his ears, and first recalled him to recollection. They came blended with the fresh grief of Christine, who felt as if ruthless death had now robbed her of a brother. There was also the struggling emotion of one whose interest in him had a still tender and engrossing claim.

"This is so wonderful!" said the trembling Doge, who dreaded lest the next syllable that was uttered might destroy the blessed illusion, "so wildly improbable, that, though my soul yearns to believe it, my reason refuses credence. It is not enough to utter this sudden intelligence, Balthazar; it must be proved. Furnish but a moiety of the evidence that is necessary to establish a legal fact, and I will render thee the richest of thy class in Christendom! And thou, Sigismund, come close to my heart, noble boy," he added, with outstretched arms, "that I may bless thee, while there is hope—that I may feel one beat of a father's pulse—one instant of a father's joy!"

Sigismund knelt at the venerable Prince's feet, and receiving his head on his shoulders, their tears mingled. But even at that precious moment both felt a sense of insecurity, as if the exquisite pleasure of so pure a happiness was too intense to last. Maso looked upon this scene with cold displeasure; his averted face denoting a stronger feeling than disappointment, though the power of natural sympathy was so strong as to draw evidences of its force from the eyes of all the others present.

"Bless thee, bless thee, my child, my dearly beloved son!" murmured the Doge, lending himself to the improbable tale of Balthazar for a delicious instant, and kissing the cheeks of Sigismund as one would embrace a smiling infant; "may the God of heaven and earth, His only Son, and the holy Virgin undefiled, unite to bless thee, here and hereafter, be thou whom thou mayest! I owe thee one precious instant of happiness, such as I have never tasted before. To find a child would not be enough to give it birth; but to believe thee to be that son touches on the joys of paradise!"

Sigismund fervently kissed the hand that had rested affectionately on his head during this diction; then, feeling the necessity of having some guarantee for the existence

of emotions so sweet, he rose and made a warm and strong appeal to him who had so long passed for his father to be more explicit, and to justify his new-born hopes by some evidence better than his simple asseveration ; for solemnly as the latter had been made, and profound as he knew to be the reverence of truth which the despised headsmen not only entertained himself but inculcated on all in whom he had any interest, the revelation he had just made seemed too improbable to resist the doubts of one who knew his happiness to be the fruit of the forfeiture of his veracity.

CHAPTER XXX.

“We rest—a dream has power to poison sleep ;
 We rise—one wandering thought pollutes the day ;
 We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep ;
 Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away.”—SHELLEY.

THE tale of Balthazar was simple but eloquent. His union with Marguerite, in spite of the world's obloquy and injustice, had been blessed by the wise and merciful Being who knew how to temper the wind to the shorn lamb.

“We knew we were all to each other,” he continued, after briefly alluding to the early history of their births and love ; “and we felt the necessity for living for ourselves. Ye that are born to honors, who meet with smiles and respectful looks in all ye meet, can know little of the feeling which binds together the unhappy. When God gave us our first-born, as he lay a smiling babe in her lap, looking up into her eye with the innocence that most likens man to angels, Marguerite shed bitter tears at the thought of such a creature's being condemned by the laws to shed the blood of men. The reflection that he was to live forever an outcast from his kind was bitter to a mother's heart. We had made many offers to the canton to be released ourselves from this charge ; we had prayed them—Herr Melchior, you should know how earnestly we have prayed the council, to be suffered to live like others, and without this accursed doom—but they would not. They said the usage was ancient, that change was dangerous, and that what God willed must come to pass. We could not bear that the burden we found so hard to endure ourselves should go

down forever as a curse upon our descendants, Herr Doge," he continued, raising his meek face in the pride of honesty ; " it is well for those who are the possessors of honors to be proud of their privileges ; but when the inheritance is one of wrongs and scorn, when the evil eyes of our fellows are upon us, the heart sickens. Such was our feeling when we looked upon our first-born. The wish to save him from his own disgrace was uppermost, and we bethought us of the means."

" Aye !" sternly interrupted Marguerite. " I parted with my child, and silenced a mother's longings, proud nobles, that he might not become the tool of your ruthless policy ; I gave up a mother's joy in nourishing and cherishing her young, that the little innocent might live among his fellows, as God had created him, their equal, and not their victim !"

Balthazar paused, as was usual with him whenever his energetic wife manifested any of her strong and masculine qualities, and then, when deep silence had followed her remark, he proceeded.

" We wanted not for wealth ; all we asked was to be like others in the world's respect. With our money it was very easy to find those in another canton, who were willing to take the little Sigismund into their keeping. After which a feigned death and a private burial did the rest. The deceit was easily practised, for as few cared for the griefs as for the happiness of the headsman's family. The child had drawn near the end of its first year, when I was called upon to execute my office on a stranger. The criminal had taken life in a drunken brawl in one of the towns of the canton, and he was said to be a man who had trifled with the precious gifts of birth, it being suspected that he was noble. I went with a heavy heart, for never did I strike a blow without praying God it might be the last ; but it was heavier when I reached the place where the culprit awaited his fate. The tidings of my poor son's death reached me as I put foot on the threshold of the desolate prison, and I turned aside to weep for my own woes, before I entered to see my victim. The condemned man had great unwillingness to die ; he had sent for me many hours before the fatal moment, to make acquaintance, as he said, with the hand that was to dispatch him to the presence of his last and eternal Judge."

Balthazar paused ; he appeared to meditate on a scene

that had probably left indelible impressions on his mind. Shuddering involuntarily, he raised his eyes from the pavement of the chapel, and continued the recital, always in the same subdued and tranquil manner.

"I have been the unwilling instrument of many a violent death—I have seen the most reckless sinners in the agonies of sudden and compelled repentance, but never have I witnessed so wild and fearful a struggle between earth and heaven—the world and the grave—passion and the rebuke of Providence—as attended the last hours of that unhappy man! There were moments in which the mild spirit of Christ won upon his evil mood, 'tis true; but the picture was, in general, that of revenge so fierce, that the powers of hell alone could give it birth in a human heart. He had with him an infant of an age just fitted to be taken from the breast. This child appeared to awaken the fiercest conflicting feelings; he both yearned over it and detested its sight, though hatred seemed most to prevail."

"This was horrible!" murmured the Doge.

"It was the more horrible, Herr Doge, that it should come from one who was justly condemned to the axe. He rejected the priests; he would have naught of any but me. My soul loathed the wretch—yet so few ever showed an interest in us—and it would have been cruel to desert a dying man! At the end, he placed the child in my care, furnishing more gold than was sufficient to rear it frugally to the age of manhood, and leaving other valuables which I have kept as proofs that might some day be useful. All I could learn of the infant's origin was simply this. It came from Italy, and of Italian parents; its mother died soon after its birth,"—a groan escaped the Doge—"its father still lived, and was the object of the criminal's implacable hatred, as its mother had been of his ardent love; its birth was noble, and it had been baptized in the bosom of the Church by the name of Gaetano."

"It must be he!—it is—it must be my beloved son!" exclaimed the Doge, unable to control himself any longer. He spread wide his arms, and Sigismund threw himself upon his bosom, though there still remained fearful apprehensions that all he heard was a dream. "Go on—go on—excellent Balthazar," added the Signor Grimaldi, drying his eyes and struggling to command himself. "I shall have no peace until all is revealed to the last syllable of thy wonderful, thy glorious tale!"

"There remains but little more to say, Herr Doge. The fatal hour arrived, and the criminal was transported to the place where he was to give up his life. While seated in the chair in which he received the fatal blow, his spirit underwent infernal torments. I have reason to think that there were moments when he would gladly have made his peace with God. But the demons prevailed; he died in his sins! From the hour when he committed the little Gaetano to my keeping, I did not cease to entreat to be put in possession of the secret of the child's birth, but the sole answer I received was an order to appropriate the gold to my own uses, and to adopt the boy as my own. The sword was in my hand, and the signal to strike was given, when, for the last time, I asked the name of the infant's family and country, as a duty I could not neglect. 'He is thine—he is thine,' was the answer. 'Tell me, Balthazar, is thy office hereditary, as is wont in these regions?' I was compelled, as ye know, to say it was. 'Then adopt the urchin; rear him to fatten on the blood of his fellows!' It was mockery to trifle with such a spirit. When his head fell, it still had on its fierce features traces of the infernal triumph with which his spirit departed!"

"The monster was a just sacrifice to the laws of the canton!" exclaimed the single-minded bailiff. "Thou seest, Herr Melchior, that we do well in arming the hand of the executioner, in spite of all the sentiment of the weak-minded. Such a wretch was surely unworthy to live."

This burst of official felicitation from Peterchen, who rarely neglected to draw a conclusion favorable to the existing order of things, like most of those who reap their exclusive advantage, and to the prejudice of innovation, produced little attention; all present were too much absorbed in the facts related by Balthazar, to turn aside to speak, or think, of other matters.

"What became of the boy?" demanded the worthy clavier, who had taken as deep an interest as the rest, in the progress of the narrative.

"I could not desert him, father; nor did I wish to. He came into my guardianship at a moment when God, to reprove our repinings at a lot that he had chosen to impose, had taken our own little Sigismund to heaven. I filled the place of the dead infant with my living charge; I gave to him the name of my own son, and I can say con-

fidently, that I transferred to him the love I had borne my own issue ; though time, and use, and a knowledge of the child's character, were perhaps necessary to complete the last. Marguerite never knew the deception, though a mother's instinct and tenderness took the alarm and raised suspicions. We have never spoken freely on this together, and like you, she now heareth the truth for the first time."

"'Twas a fearful mystery between God and my own heart !" murmured the woman ; "I forbore to trouble it—Sigismund or Gaetano, or whatever you will have his name, filled my affections, and I strove to be satisfied. The boy is dear to me, and ever will be, though you seat him on a throne ; but Christine—the poor stricken Christine—is truly the child of my bosom !"

Sigismund went and knelt at the feet of her whom he had ever believed his mother, and earnestly begged her blessing and continued affection. The tears streamed from Marguerite's eyes, as she willingly bestowed the first, and promised never to withhold the last.

"Hast thou any of the trinkets or garments that were given thee with the child, or canst render an account of the place where they are still to be found ?" demanded the Doge, whose whole mind was too deeply set on appeasing his doubts to listen to aught else.

"They are all here in the convent. The gold has been fairly committed to Sigismund, to form his equipment as a soldier. The child was kept apart, receiving such education as a learned priest could give, till of an age to serve, and then I sent him to bear arms in Italy, which I knew to be the country of his birth, though I never knew to what prince his allegiance was due. The time had now come when I thought it due to the youth to let him know the real nature of the tie between us ; but I shrank from paining Marguerite and myself, and I even did his heart the credit to believe that he would rather belong to us, humbled and despised though we be, than find himself a nameless outcast, without home, country, or parentage. It was necessary, however, to speak, and it was my purpose to reveal the truth, here at the convent, in the presence of Christine. For this reason, and to enable Sigismund to make inquiries for his family, the effects received from the unhappy criminal with the child were placed among his baggage secretly. They are, at this moment, on the mountain."

The venerable old Prince trembled violently ; for, with the intense feeling of one who dreaded that his dearest hopes might yet be disappointed, he feared, while he most wished, to consult these mute but veracious witnesses.

“Let them be produced!—let them be instantly produced and examined!” he whispered eagerly to those around him. Then, turning slowly to the immovable Maso, he demanded—“And thou, man of falsehood and of blood! what dost thou reply to this clear and probable tale?”

Il Maledetto smiled, as if superior to a weakness that had blinded the others. The expression of his countenance was filled with that look of calm superiority which certainty gives to the well informed over the doubting and deceived.

“I have to reply, signore, and honored father,” he coolly answered, “that Balthazar hath right cleverly related a tale that hath been ingenuously devised. That I am Bartolo, I repeat to thee, can be proved by a hundred living tongues in Italy. Thou knowest best who Bartolo Contini is, Doge of Genoa.”

“He speaks the truth,” returned the Prince, dropping his head in disappointment. “Oh! Melchior, I have had but two sure proofs of what he intimates! I have long been certain that this wretch Bartolo is my son, though never before have I been cursed with his presence. Bad as I was taught to think him, my worst fears had not painted him as I now find the truth would warrant.”

“Has there not been some fraud—art thou not the dupe of some conspiracy of which money has been the object?”

The Doge shook his head in a way to prove that he could not possibly flatter himself with such a hope.

“Never: my offers of money have always been rejected.”

“Why should I take the gold of my father?” added Il Maledetto; “my own skill and courage more than suffice for my wants.”

The nature of the answer, and the composed demeanor of Maso, produced an embarrassing pause.

“Let the two stand forth and be confronted,” said the puzzled clavier, at length; “nature often reveals the truth when the uttermost powers of man are at fault—if either is the true child of the Prince, we should find some resemblance to the father to support his claim.”

The test, though of doubtful virtue, was eagerly adopted, for the truth had now become so involved as to excite a keen interest in all present. The desire to explain the mystery was general, and the slightest means of attaining such an end became of a value proportionate to the difficulty of effecting the object. Sigismund and Maso were placed beneath the lamp where its light was strongest, and every eye turned eagerly to their countenances, in order to discover, or to fancy it discovered, some of those secret signs by which the mysterious affinities of nature are to be traced. A more puzzling examination could not well have been essayed. There was proof to give the victory to each of the pretenders, if such a term may be used with propriety as it concerns the passive Sigismund, and much to defeat the claims of the latter. In the olive-colored tint, the dark, rich, rolling eye, and in stature, the advantage was altogether with Maso, whose outline of countenance and penetrating expression had also a resemblance to those of the Doge, so marked as to render it quite apparent to any who wished to find it. The habits of the mariner had probably diminished the likeness, but it was too obviously there to escape detection. That hardened and rude appearance, the consequence of exposure, which rendered it difficult to pronounce within ten years of his real age, contributed a little to conceal what may be termed the latent character of his countenance, but the features themselves were undeniably a rude copy of the more polished lineaments of the Prince.

The case was less clear as respects Sigismund. The advantage of ruddy and vigorous youth rendered him such a resemblance of the Doge—in the points where it existed—as we find between the aged and those portraits which have been painted in their younger and happier days. The bold outline was not unlike that of the noble features of the venerable Prince, but neither the eye, the hair, nor the complexion, had the hues of Italy.

“Thou seest,” said Maso, tauntingly, when the disappointed clavier admitted the differences in the latter particulars, “this is an imposition that will not pass. I swear to you, as there is faith in man, and hope for the dying Christian, that so far as any know their parentage, I am the child of Gaetano Grimaldi, the present Doge of Genoa, and of no other man! May the saints desert me!—the blessed Mother of God be deaf to my prayers!—and

all men hunt me with their curses, if I say aught in this but holy truth !”

The fearful energy with which Maso uttered this solemn appeal, and a certain sincerity that marked his manner, and perhaps we might even say his character, in spite of the dissolute recklessness of his principles, served greatly to weaken the growing opinion in favor of his competitor.

“And this noble youth ?” asked the sorrowing Doge—“this generous and elevated boy, whom I have already held next to my heart, with so much of a father’s joy—who and what is he ?”

“Eccellenza, I wish to say nothing against the Signor Sigismondo. He is a gallant swimmer, and a stanch support in time of need. Be he Swiss or Genoese, either country may be proud of him ; but self-love teaches us all to take care of our own interests before those of another. It would be far pleasanter to dwell in the Palazzo Grimaldi, on our warm and sunny gulf, honored and esteemed as the heir of a noble name, than to be cutting heads in Berne ; and honest Balthazar does but follow his instinct, in seeking preferment for his son !”

Each eye now turned on the headsman, who quailed not under the scrutiny, but maintained the firm front of one conscious that he had done no wrong.

“I have not said that Sigismund is the child of any,” he answered in his meek manner, but with a steadiness that won him credit with the listeners. “I have only said that he belongs not to me. No father need wish a worthier son, and Heaven knows that I yield my own claims with a sorrow that it would be grievous to bear, did I not hope a better fortune for him than any which can come from a connection with a race accursed. The likeness which is seen in Maso, and which Sigismund is thought to want, proves little, noble gentlemen and reverend monks ; for all who have looked closely into these matters know that resemblances are as often found between the distant branches of the same family, as between those who are more nearly united. Sigismund is not of us, and none can see any trace of either my own or of Marguerite’s family in his person or features.”

Balthazar paused that there might be an examination of this fact, and, in truth, the most ingenious fancy could not have detected the least affinity in looks, between either of

those whom he had so long thought his parents and the young soldier.

"Let the Doge of Genoa question his memory, and look further than himself. Can he find no sleeping smile, no color of the hair, nor any other common point of appearance, between the youth and some of those whom he once knew and loved?"

The anxious Prince turned eagerly toward Sigismund, and a gleam of joy lighted his face again, as he studied the young man's features.

"By San Francesco! Melchior, the honest Balthazar is right. My grandmother was a Venetian, and she had the fair hair of the boy—the eye, too, is hers—and—Oh!" bending his head aside and veiling his eyes with his hand, "I see the anxious gaze that was so constant in the sainted and injured Angiolina, after my greater wealth and power had tempted her kinsmen to force her to yield to an unwilling hand! Wretch! thou art not Bartolo; thy tale is a wicked deception, invented to shield thee from the punishment due to thy crime!"

"Admitting that I am not Bartolo, Eccellenza, does the Signor Sigismondo claim to be he? Have you not assured yourself that a certain Bartolo Contini, a man whose life is passed in open hostility to the laws, is your child? Did you not employ your confidant and secretary to learn the facts? Did he not hear from the dying lips of a holy priest, who knew all the circumstances, that 'Bartolo Contini is the son of Gaetano Grimaldi?' Did not the confederate of your implacable enemy, Cristofero Serrani, swear the same to you? Have you not seen papers that were taken with your child to confirm it all, and did you not send this signet as a gage that Bartolo should not want your aid, in any strait that might occur in his wild manner of living, when you learned that he resolutely preferred remaining what he was, to becoming an image of sickly repentance and newly assumed nobility, in your gorgeous palace on the Strada Balbi?"

The Doge again bowed his head in dismay, for all this he knew to be true beyond a shadow of hope.

"Here is some sad mistake," he said with bitter regret. "Thou hast received the child of some other bereaved parent, Balthazar; but, though I cannot hope to prove myself the natural father of Sigismund, he shall at least find me one in affection and good offices. If his life be not

due to me, I owe him mine ; the debt shall form a tie between us little short of that to which nature herself could give birth."

"Herr Doge," returned the earnest headsman, "let us not be too hasty. If there are strong facts in favor of the claims of Maso, there are many circumstances, also, in favor of those of Sigismund. To me, the history of the last is probably more clear than it can be to any other. The time, the country, the age of the child, the name, and the fearful revelations of the criminal, are all strong proofs in Sigismund's behalf. Here are the effects that were given me with the child ; it is possible that they, too, may throw weight into his scale."

Balthazar had taken means to procure the package in question from among the luggage of Sigismund, and he now proceeded to expose its contents, while a breathless silence betrayed the interest with which the result was expected. He first laid upon the pavement of the chapel a collection of child's clothing. The articles were rich, and according to the fashions of the times ; but they contained no positive proofs that could go to substantiate the origin of the wearer, except as they raised the probability of his having come of an elevated rank in life. As the different objects were placed upon the stones, Adelheid and Christine kneeled beside them, each too intently absorbed with the progress of the inquiry to bethink herself of those forms which, in common, throw a restraint upon the manners of their sex. The latter appeared to forget her own sorrows, for a moment, in a new-born interest in her brother's fortunes, while the ears of the former drank in each syllable that fell from the lips of the different speakers, with an avidity that her strong sympathy with the youth could alone give.

"Here is a case containing trinkets of value," added Balthazar. "The condemned man said they were taken through ignorance, and he was accustomed to suffer the child to amuse himself with them in the prison."

"These were my first offerings to my wife, in return for the gift she had made me of the precious babe," said the Doge, in such a smothered voice as we are apt to use when examining objects that recall the presence of the dead—"Blessed Angiolina ! these jewels are so many tokens of thy pale but happy countenance ; thou felt a mother's joy at that sacred moment, and could even smile on me !"

"And here is a talisman in sapphire, with many Eastern characters ; I was told it had been an heirloom in the family of the child, and was put about its neck at the birth, by the hands of its own father."

"I ask no more—I ask no more ! God be praised for this, the last and best of all his mercies !" cried the Prince, clasping his hands with devotion. "This jewel was worn by myself in infancy, and I placed it around the neck of the babe with my own hands, as thou sayest—I ask no more."

"And Bartolo Contini !" muttered Il Maledetto.

"Maso !" exclaimed a voice, which until then had been mute in the chapel. It was Adelheid who had spoken. Her hair had fallen in wild profusion over her shoulders, as she still knelt over the articles on the pavement, and her hands were clasped entreatingly, as if she deprecated the rude interruptions which had so often dashed the cup from their lips, as they were about to yield to the delight of believing Sigismund to be the child of the Prince of Genoa.

"Thou art another of a fond and weak sex, to swell the list of confiding spirits that have been betrayed by the selfishness and falsehood of men," answered the mocking mariner. "Go to, girl !—make thyself a nun ; thy Sigismund is an impostor."

Adelheid, by a quick and decided interposition of her hand, prevented an impetuous movement of the young soldier, who would have struck his audacious rival to his feet. Without changing her kneeling attitude, she then spoke, modestly, but with a firmness which generous sentiments enable women to assume even more readily than the stronger sex, when extraordinary occasions call for the sacrifice of that reserve in which her feebleness is ordinarily intrenched.

"I know not, Maso, in what manner thou hast learned the tie which connects me with Sigismund," she said ; "but I have no longer any wish to conceal it. Be he the son of Balthazar, or be he the son of a prince, he has received my troth with the consent of my honored father, and our fortunes will shortly be one. There might be forwardness in a maiden thus openly avowing her preference for a youth ; but here, with none to own him, oppressed with his long-endured wrongs, and assailed in his most sacred affections, Sigismund has a right to my voice. Let

him belong to whom else he may, I speak by my venerable father's authority, when I say he belongs to us."

"Melchior, is this true?" cried the Doge.

"The girl's words are but an echo of what my heart feels," answered the Baron, looking about him proudly, as if he would browbeat any who should presume to think that he had consented to corrupt the blood of Willading by the measure.

"I have watched thine eye, Maso, as one nearly interested in the truth," continued Adelheid, "and I now appeal to thee, as thou lovest thine own soul, to disburden thyself! While thou may'st have told some truth, the jealous affection of a woman has revealed to me that thou hast kept back part! Speak, then, and relieve the soul of this venerable Prince from torture."

"And deliver my own body to the wheel! This may be well to the warm imagination of a love-sick girl, but we of the contraband, have too much practice in men uselessly to throw away an advantage."

"Thou mayest have confidence in our faith. I have seen much of thee within the last few days, Maso, and I wish not to think thee capable of the bloody deed that hath been committed on the mountain, though I fear thy life is only too ungoverned; still I will not believe that the hero of the Leman can be the assassin of St. Bernard."

"When thy young dreams are over, fair one, and thou seest the world under its true colors, thou wilt know that the hearts of men come partly of Heaven and partly of Hell."

Maso laughed in his most reckless manner as he delivered this opinion.

"'Tis useless to deny that thou hast sympathies," continued the maiden steadily; "thou hast in secret more pleasure in serving than in injuring thy race. Thou canst not have been in such straits in company with the Signor Sigismondo, without imbibing some touch of his noble generosity. You have struggled together for our common good, you come of the same God, have the same manly courage, are equally stout of heart, strong of hand, and willing to do for others. Such a heart must have enough of noble and human impulses to cause you to love justice. Speak, then, and I pledge our sacred word that thou shalt fare better for thy candor than by taking refuge in thy present fraud. Bethink thee, Maso, that the happiness of

this aged man, of Sigismund himself, if thou wilt, for I blush not to say it—of a weak and affectionate girl, is in thy keeping. Give us truth holy ; sacred truth, and we pardon the past.”

Il Maledetto was moved by the beautiful earnestness of the speaker. Her ingenuous interest in the result, with the solemnity of her appeal, shook his purpose.

“Thou know’st not what thou say’st, lady ; thou ask’st my life,” he answered, after pondering in a way to give a new impulse to the dying hopes of the Doge.

“Though there is no quality more sacred than justice,” interposed the châtelain, who alone could speak with authority in the Valais ; “it is fairly within the province of her servants to permit her to go unexpiated, in order that greater good may come of the sacrifice. If thou wilt prove aught that is of grave importance to the interests of the Prince of Genoa, Valais owes it to the love it bears his republic to requite the service.”

Maso listened, at first with a cold ear. He felt the distrust of one who had sufficient knowledge of the world to be acquainted with the thousand expedients that were resorted to by men, in order to justify their daily want of faith. He questioned the châtelain closely as to his meaning, nor was it till a late hour, and after long and weary explanations on both sides, that the parties came to an understanding.

On the part of those who, on this occasion, were the representatives of that high attribute of the Deity which among men is termed justice, it was sufficiently apparent that they understood its exercise with certain reservations that might be made at pleasure in favor of their own views ; and, on the part of Maso, there was no attempt to conceal the suspicions he entertained to the last, that he might be a sufferer by lessening in any degree the strength of the defences by which he was at present shielded, as the son, real or fancied, of a person so powerful as the Prince of Genoa.

As usually happens when there is a mutual wish to avoid extremities, and when conflicting interests are managed with equal address, the negotiation terminated in a compromise. As the result will be shown in the regular course of the narrative, the reader is referred to the closing chapter for the explanation.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Speak, oh, speak!
And take me from the rack."—YOUNG.

It will be remembered that three days were passed in the convent in that interval which occurred between the arrival of the travellers and those of the châtelain and the bailiff. The determination of admitting the claims of Sigismund, so frankly announced by Adelheid in the preceding chapter, was taken during this time. Separated from the world, and amid that magnificent solitude where the passions and the vulgar interests of life sank into corresponding insignificance as the majesty of God became hourly more visible, the Baron had been gradually won upon to consent. Love for his child, aided by the fine moral and personal qualities of the young man himself, which here stood out in strong relief, like one of the stern piles of those Alps that now appear to his eyes so much superior, in their eternal beds, to all the vine-clad hills and teeming valleys of the lower world, had been the immediate and efficient agents in producing this decision. It is not pretended that the Bernese made an easy conquest over his prejudices, which was in truth no other than a conquest over himself, he being, morally considered, little other than a collection of the narrow opinions and exclusive doctrines which it was then the fashion to believe necessary to high civilization. On the contrary, the struggle had been severe; nor is it probable that the gentle blandishments of Adelheid, the eloquent but silent appeals to his reason that were constantly made by Sigismund in his deportment, or the arguments of his old comrade, the Signor Grimaldi, who, with a philosophy that is more often made apparent in our friendships than in our practice, dilated copiously on the wisdom of sacrificing a few worthless and antiquated opinions to the happiness of an only child, would have prevailed, had the Baron been in a situation less abstracted from the ordinary circumstances of his rank and habits, than that in which he had been so accidentally thrown. The pious clavier, too, who had obtained some claims to the confidence of the guests of the convent by his services, and by the risks he had run in their

company, came to swell the number of Sigismund's friends. Of humble origin himself, and attached to the young man not only by his general merits, but by his conduct on the lake, he neglected no good occasion to work upon Melchior's mind, after he himself had become acquainted with the nature of the young man's hopes. As they paced the brown and naked rocks together, in the vicinity of the convent, the Augustine discoursed on the perishable nature of human hopes, and on the frailty of human opinions. He dwelt with pious fervor on the usefulness of recalling the thoughts from the turmoil of daily and contracted interests, to a wider view of the truths of existence. Pointing to the wild scene around him, he likened the confused masses of the mountains, their sterility, and their ruthless tempests, to the world with its want of happy fruits, its disorders, and its violence. Then directing the attention of his companion to the azure vault above him, which, seen at that elevation, and in that pure atmosphere, resembled a benign canopy of the softest tints and colors, he made glowing appeals to the eternal and holy tranquillity of the state of being to which they were both fast hastening, and which had its type in the mysterious and imposing calm of that tranquil and illimitable void. He drew his moral in favor of a measured enjoyment of our advantages here, as well as of rendering love and justice to all who merited our esteem, and to the disadvantage of those iron prejudices which confine the best sentiments in the fetters of opinions founded in the ordinances and provisions of the violent and selfish.

It was after one of these interesting dialogues that Melchior de Willading, his heart softened and his soul touched with the hopes of heaven, listened with a more indulgent ear to the firm declaration of Adelheid, that unless she became the wife of Sigismund, her self-respect, no less than her affections, must compel her to pass her life unmarried. We shall not say that the maiden herself philosophized on premises as sublime as those of the good monk, for with her the warm impulses of the heart lay at the bottom of her resolution ; but even she had the respectable support of reason to sustain her cause. The Baron had that innate desire to perpetuate his own existence in that of his descendants, which appears to be a property of nature. Alarmed at a declaration which threatened annihilation to his line, while at the same time he was more than usually

under the influence of his better feelings, he promised that if the charge of murder could be removed from Balthazar, he would no longer oppose the union. We should be giving the reader an opinion a little too favorable of Herr von Willading, were we to say that he did not repent having made this promise soon after it was uttered. He was in a state of mind that resembled the vanes of his own towers, which changed their direction with every fresh current of air, but he was by far too honorable to think seriously of violating a faith that he had once fairly plighted. He had moments of unpleasant misgivings as to the wisdom and propriety of his promise, but they were of that species of regret which is known to attend an unavoidable evil. If he had any expectations of being released from his pledge, they were bottomed on certain vague impressions that Balthazar would be found guilty, though the constant and earnest asseverations of Sigismund in favor of his father had greatly succeeded in shaking his faith on this point. Adelheid had stronger hopes than either; the fears of the young man himself preventing him from fully participating in her confidence, while her father shared her expectations on that tormenting principle which causes us to dread the worst. When, therefore, the jewelry of Jacques Colis was found in the possession of Maso, and Balthazar was unanimously acquitted, not only from this circumstance, which went so conclusively to criminate another, but from the want of any other evidence against him than the fact of his being found in the bone-house instead of the Refuge, an accident that might well have happened to any other traveller in the storm, the Baron resolutely prepared himself to redeem his pledge. It is scarcely necessary to add how much this honorable sentiment was strengthened by the unexpected declaration of the headsman concerning the birth of Sigismund. Notwithstanding the asseveration of Maso that the whole was an invention conceived to favor the son of Balthazar, it was supported by proofs so substantial and palpable, to say nothing of the natural and veracious manner in which the tale was related, as to create a strong probability in the minds of the witnesses, that it might be true. Although it remained to be discovered who were the real parents of Sigismund, few now believed that he owed his existence to the headsman.

A short summary of the facts may aid the reader in bet-

ter understanding the circumstances on which so much denouement depends.

It has been revealed in the course of the narrative that the Signor Grimaldi had wedded a lady younger than himself, whose affections were already in the possession of one that, in moral qualities, was unworthy of her love, but who in other respects was perhaps better suited to become her husband than the powerful noble to whom her family had given her hand. The birth of their son was soon followed by the death of the mother, and the abduction of the child. Years had passed, when the Signor Grimaldi was first apprised of the existence of the latter. He had received this important information at a moment when the authorities of Genoa were most active in pursuing those who had long and desperately trifled with the laws, and the avowed motive for the revelation was an appeal to his natural affection in behalf of a son, who was likely to become a victim of his practices. The recovery of a child under such circumstances was a blow severer than his loss, and it will readily be supposed that the truth of the pretension of Maso, who then went by the name of Bartolomeo Contini, was admitted with the greatest caution. Reference had been made by the friends of the smuggler to a dying monk, whose character was above suspicion, and who corroborated, with his latest breath, the statement of Maso, by affirming before God and the saints that he knew him, so far as men could know a fact like this, to be the son of Signor Grimaldi. This grave testimony, given under circumstances of such solemnity, and supported by the production of important papers that had been stolen with the child, removed the suspicions of the Doge. He secretly interposed his interest to save the criminal, though, after a fruitless attempt to effect a reformation of his habits by means of confidential agents, he had never consented to see him.

Such then was the nature of the conflicting statements. While hope and the pure delight of finding himself the father of a son like Sigismund, caused the aged Prince to cling to the claims of the young soldier with fond pertinacity, his cooler and more deliberate judgment had already been formed in favor of another. In the long private examination which succeeded the scene in the chapel, Maso had gradually drawn more into himself, becoming vague and mysterious, until he succeeded in exciting a most pain-

ful state of doubt and expectation in all who witnessed his deportment. Profiting by this advantage, he suddenly changed his tactics. He promised revelations of importance, on the condition that he should first be placed in security within the frontiers of Piedmont. The prudent châtelain soon saw that the case was getting to be one in which Justice was expected to be blind in the more politic signification of the term. He, therefore, drew off his loquacious coadjutor, the bailiff, in a way to leave the settlement of the affair to the feelings and wishes of the Doge. The latter, by the aid of Melchior and Sigismund, soon effected an understanding, in which the conditions of the mariner were admitted ; when the party separated for the night, Il Maledetto, on whom weighed the entire load of Jacques Colis's murder, was again committed to his temporary prison, while Balthazar, Pippo, and Conrad, were permitted to go at large, as having successfully passed the ordeal of examination.

Day dawned upon the Col long ere the shades of night had deserted the valley of the Rhone. All in the convent were in motion before the appearance of the sun, it being generally understood that the events which had so much disturbed the order of its peaceful inmates' lives, were to be brought finally to a close, and that their duties were about to return into the customary channels. Orisons are constantly ascending to heaven from the pass of St. Bernard, but on the present occasion the stir in and about the chapel, the manner in which the good canons hurried to and fro through the long corridors, and the general air of excitement, proclaimed that the offices of the matins possessed more than the usual interest of the regular daily devotion.

The hour was still early when all on the pass assembled in the place of worship. The body of Jacques Colis had been removed to a side chapel, where, covered with a pall, it awaited the mass for the dead. Two large church candles stood lighted on the steps of the great altar, and the spectators, including Pierre and the muleteers, the servants of the convent, and others of every rank and age, were drawn up in double files in its front. Among the silent spectators appeared Balthazar and his wife, Maso, in truth a prisoner, but with the air of a liberated man, the pilgrim and Pippo. The good prior was present in his robes, with all of his community. During the moments of

suspense which preceded the rites, he discoursed civilly with the châtelain and bailiff, both of whom returned his courtesies with interest, and in the manner in which it becomes the dignified and honored to respect appearances in the presence of their inferiors. Still, the demeanor of most was feverish and excited, as if the occasion were one of compelled gayety, into which unwelcome and extraordinary circumstances of alloy had thrust themselves unbidden.

On the opening of the door a little procession entered, headed by the clavier. Melchior de Willading led his daughter, Sigismund came next, followed by Marguerite and Christine, and the venerable Doge brought up the rear. Simple as was this wedding train, it was imposing from the dignity of the principal actors, and from the evidences of deep feeling with which all in it advanced to the altar. Sigismund was firm and self-possessed. Still his carriage was lofty and proud, as he felt that a cloud still hung over that portion of his history to which the world attached so much importance, and he had fallen back on his character and principles for support. Adelheid had lately been so much the subject of strong emotions, that she presented herself before the priest with less trepidation than was usual for a maiden; but the fixed regard, the colorless cheek, and an air of profound reverence, announced the depth and solemn character of the feelings with which she was prepared to take the vow.

The marriage rites were celebrated by the good clavier, who, not content with persuading the Baron to make this sacrifice of his prejudices, had asked permission to finish the work he had so happily commenced, by pronouncing the nuptial benediction. Melchior de Willading listened to the short ceremony with silent self-approval. He felt disposed at that instant to believe he had wisely sacrificed the interests of the world to the right, a sentiment that was a little quickened by the uncertainty which still hung over the origin of his new son, who might yet prove to be all that he could hope, as well as by the momentary satisfaction he found in manifesting his independence by bestowing the hand of his daughter upon one whose merit was so much better ascertained than his birth. In this manner do the best deceive themselves, yielding frequently to motives that would not support investigation when they believe themselves the strongest in the right. The good-

natured clavier had observed the wavering and uncertain character of the Baron's decision, and he had been induced to urge his particular request to be officiating priest by a secret apprehension that, descended again into the scenes of the world, the relenting father might become, like most other parents of these nether regions, more disposed to consult the temporal advancement than the true happiness of his child.

As one of the parties was a Protestant, no mass was said, an omission, however, that in no degree impaired the legal character of the engagement. Adelheid plighted her unvarying love and fidelity with maiden modesty, but with the steadiness of a woman whose affections and principles were superior to the little weaknesses which, on such occasions, are most apt to unsettle those who have the least of either of these great distinctive essentials of the sex. The vows to cherish and protect were uttered by Sigismund in deep manly sincerity, for, at that moment, he felt as if a life of devotion to her happiness would scarcely requite her single-minded, feminine, and unvarying truth.

"May God bless thee, dearest," murmured old Melchior, as, bending over his kneeling child, he struggled to keep down a heart which appeared disposed to mount in his throat, in spite of its master's inclinations; "bless thee—bless thee, love, now and forever. Providence has dealt sternly with thy brothers and sisters, but in leaving thee it has still left me rich in offspring. Here is our good friend Gaetano, too—his fortune has been still harder—but we will hope—we will hope. And thou, Sigismund, now that Balthazar hath disowned thee, thou must accept such a father as Heaven sends. All accidents of early life are forgotten, and Willading, like my old heart, hath gotten a new owner and a new lord!"

The young man exchanged embraces with the Baron, whose character he knew to be kind in the main, and for whom he felt the regard which was natural to his present situation. He then turned, with a hesitating eye, to the Signor Grimaldi. The Doge succeeded his friend in paying the compliments of affection to the bride, and had just released Adelheid with a warm paternal kiss.

"I pray Maria and her holy Son in thy behalf!" said the venerable Prince with dignity. "Thou enterest on new and serious duties, child, but the spirit and purity of an angel, a meekness that does not depress, and a character

whose force rather relieves than injures the softness of thy sex, can temper the ills of this fickle world, and thou may'st justly hope to see a fair portion of that felicity which thy young imagination pictures in such golden colors. And thou," he added, turning to meet the embrace of Sigismund, "whoever thou art by the first disposition of Providence, thou art now rightfully dear to me. The husband of Melchoir de Willading's daughter would ever have a claim upon his most ancient and dearest friend, but we are united by a tie that has the interest of a singular and solemn mystery. My reason tells me that I am punished for much early and wanton pride and wilfulness, in being the parent of a child that few men in any condition of life could wish to claim, while my heart would fain flatter me with being the father of a son of whom an emperor might be proud! Thou art, and thou art not, of my blood. Without these proofs of Maso's, and the testimony of the dying monk, I should proclaim thee to be the latter without hesitation; but be thou what thou may'st by birth, thou art entirely and without alloy of my love. Be tender of this fragile flower that Providence hath put under thy protection, Sigismund; cherish it as thou valuest thine own soul; this generous and confiding love of a virtuous woman is always a support, frequently a triumphant stay, to the tottering principles of man. Oh! had it pleased God earlier to have given my Angiolina, how different might have been our lives! This dark uncertainty would not now hang over the most precious of human affections, and my closing hour would be blessed. Heaven and its saints preserve ye both, my children, and preserve ye long in your present innocence and affection!"

The venerable Doge ceased. The effort which had enabled him to speak gave way, and he turned aside that he might weep in the decent reserve that became his station and years.

Until now Marguerite had been silent, watching the countenances, and drinking in with avidity the words of the different speakers. It was now her turn. Sigismund knelt at her feet, pressing her hands to his lips in a manner to show that her high, though stern character, had left deep traces in his recollection. Releasing herself from his convulsed grasp, for just then the young man felt intensely the violence of severing those holy ties which, in his case, had perhaps something of a wild romance from

their secret nature, she parted the curls on his ample brow, and stood gazing long at his face, studying each lineament to its minutest shade.

"No," she said, mournfully shaking her head, "truly thou art not of us, and God hath dealt mercifully in taking away the innocent little creature whose place thou hast so long innocently usurped! Thou wert dear to me, Sigismund—very dear—for I thought thee under the curse of my race; do not hate me, if I say my heart is now in the grave of——"

"Mother!" exclaimed the young man, reproachfully.

"Well, I am still thy mother," answered Marguerite, smiling, though painfully, "thou art a noble boy, and no change of fortune can ever alter thy soul. 'Tis a cruel parting, Balthazar, and I know not, after all, that thou didst well to deceive me, for I have had as much grief as joy in the youth—grief, bitter grief, that one like him should be condemned to live under the curse of our race—but it is ended now—he is not of us—no, he is no longer of us!"

This was uttered so plaintively that Sigismund bent his face to his hands and sobbed aloud.

"Now that the happy and proud weep, 'tis time that the wretched dried their tears," added the wife of Balthazar, looking about her with a sad mixture of agony and pride struggling in her countenance; for, in spite of her professions, it was plain that she yielded her claim on the noble youth with deep yearnings and an intense agony of spirit. "We have one consolation, at least, Christine—all that are not of our blood will not despise us now! Am I right, Sigismund—thou, too, wilt not turn upon us with the world, and hate those whom thou once loved?"

"Mother, mother, for the sake of the Holy Virgin, do not harrow my soul!"

"I will not distrust thee, dear; thou didst not drink at my breast, but thou hast taken in too many lessons of the truth from my lips to despise us—and yet thou art not of us, thou mayest possibly prove a prince's son, and the world so hardens the heart—and they who have been sorely pressed upon become 'suspicious——"

"For the love of God, cease, mother, or thou wilt break my heart!"

"Come hither, Christine. Sigismund, this maiden goes with thy wife; we have the greatest confidence in the

truth and principles of her thou hast wedded, for she has been tried and not found wanting. Be tender to the child; she was once thy sister, and then thou used to love her."

"Mother—thou wilt make me curse the hour I was born!"

Marguerite, while she could not overcome the cold distrust which habit had interwoven with all her opinions, felt that she was cruel, and she said no more. Stooping, she kissed the cold forehead of the young man, gave a warm embrace to her daughter, over whom she prayed fervently for a minute, and then placed the insensible girl into the open arms of Adelheid. The awful workings of nature were subdued by a superhuman will, and she turned slowly toward the silent, respectful crowd, who had scarcely breathed during this exhibition of her noble character.

"Doth any here," she sternly asked, "suspect the innocence of Balthazar?"

"None, good woman, none!" returned the bailiff, wiping his eyes; "go in peace to thy home, o' Heaven's sake, and God be with thee!"

"He stands acquitted before God and man!" added the more dignified châtelain.

Marguerite motioned for Balthazar to precede her, and she prepared to quit the chapel. On the threshold she turned and cast a lingering look at Sigismund and Christine. The two latter were weeping in each other's arms, and the soul of Marguerite yearned to mingle her tears with those she loved so well. But, stern in her resolutions, she stayed the torrent of feeling which would have been so terrible in its violence had it broken loose, and followed her husband, with a dry and glowing eye. They descended the mountain with a vacuum in their hearts which taught even this persecuted pair that there are griefs in nature that surpass all the artificial woes of life.

The scene just related did not fail to disturb the spectators. Maso dashed his hand across his eyes, and seemed touched with a stronger working of sympathy than it accorded with his present policy to show, while both Conrad and Pippo did credit to their humanity, by fairly shedding tears. The latter, indeed, showed manifestations of a sensibility that is not altogether incompatible with ordinary recklessness and looseness of principle. He even begged leave to kiss the hand of the bride, wishing her joy with fervor, as one who had gone through great danger in her

company. The whole party then separated with an exchange of cordial good feeling which proves that, however much men may be disposed to jostle and discompose their fellows in the great highway of life, nature has infused into their composition some great redeeming qualities to make us regret the abuses by which they have been so much perverted.

On quitting the chapel, the whole of the travellers made their dispositions to depart. The bailiff and the châtelain went down toward the Rhone, as well satisfied with themselves as if they had discharged their trust with fidelity by committing Maso to prison, and discoursing as they rode along on the singular chances which had brought a son of the Doge of Genoa before them in a condition so questionable. The good Augustines helped the travellers who were destined for the other descent into their saddles, and acquitted themselves of the last act of hospitality by following the footsteps of the mules, with wishes for their safe arrival at Aoste.

The path across the Col has been already described. It winds along the margin of the little lake, passing the site of the ancient temple of Jupiter at the distance of a few hundred yards from the convent. Sweeping past the northern extremity of the little basin, where it crosses the frontiers of Piedmont, it cuts the ragged wall of rock, and, after winding *en corniche* for a short distance by the edge of a fearful ravine, it plunges at once toward the plains of Italy.

As there was a desire to have no unnecessary witnesses of Maso's promised revelations, Conrad and Pippo had been advised to quit the mountain before the rest of the party, and the muleteers were requested to keep a little in the rear. At the point where the path leaves the lake, the whole dismounted, Pierre going ahead with the beasts, with a view to make the first precipitous pitch from the Col on foot. Maso now took the lead. When he reached the spot where the convent is last in view, he stopped and turned to gaze at the venerable and storm-beaten pile.

"Thou hesitatest," observed the Baron de Willading, who suspected an intention to escape.

"Signore, the look at even a stone is a melancholy office, when it is known to be the last. I have often climbed to the Col, but I shall never dare do it again ; for,

though the honorable and worthy châtelain, and the most worthy bailiff, are willing to pay their homage to a doge of Genoa in his own person, they may be less tender of his honor when he is absent. Addio, caro, San Bernardo! Like me, thou art solitary and weather-beaten, and, like me, though rude of aspect, thou hast thy uses. We are both beacons—thou to tell the traveller where to seek safety, and I to warn him where danger is to be avoided."

There is a dignity in manly suffering, that commands our sympathies. All who heard this apostrophe to the abode of the Augustines were struck with its simplicity and its moral. They followed the speaker in silence, however, to the point where the path makes its first sudden descent. The spot was favorable to the purpose of Il Maledetto. Though still on the level of the lake, the convent, the Col, and all it contained, with the exception of a short line of its stony path, were shut from their view, by the barrier of intervening rock. The ravine lay beneath, ragged, ferruginous, and riven into a hundred faces by the eternal action of the seasons. All above, beneath, and around, was naked, and chaotic as the elements of the globe before they received the order-giving touch of the Creator.

"Signore," said Maso, respectfully raising his cap, and speaking with calmness, "this confusion of nature resembles my own character. Here everything is torn; sterile, and wild; but patience, charity, and generous love, hath been able to change even this rocky height into an abode for those who live for the good of others. There is none so worthless that use may not be made of him. We are types of the earth, our mother; useless and savage, or repaying the labor that we receive, as we are treated like men, or hunted like beasts. If the great, and the powerful, and the honored, would become the friends and monitors of the weak and ignorant, instead of remaining so many watch-dogs to snarl at and bite all that they fear may encroach on their privileges, raising the cry of the wolf each time that they hear the wail of the timid and bleating lamb, the fairest works of God would not be so often defaced. I have lived, and it is probable that I shall die an outlaw; but the severest pangs I have ever known come from the mockery which accuses my nature of abuses that are the fruits of your own injustice. That stone," kicking a bit of rock from the path into the ravine beneath, "is as

much master of its direction after my foot has set its mass in motion, as the poor untaught being who is thrown upon the world, despised, unaided, suspected, and condemned even before he has sinned, has the command of his own course. My mother was fair and good. She wanted only the power to withstand the arts of one, who, honored in the opinions of all around her, undermined her virtue. He was great, noble, and powerful ; while she had little beside her beauty and her weakness. Signori,—the odds against her were too much. I was the punishment of her fault. I came into a world then, in which every man despised me before I had done any act to deserve its scorn."

"Nay, this is pushing opinions to extremes!" interrupted the Signor Grimaldi, who listened breathlessly to the syllables as they came from the other's tongue.

"We began, signori, as we have ended ; distrustful, and struggling to see which could do the other the most harm. A reverend and holy monk, who knew my history, would have filled a soul with heaven that the wrongs of the world had already driven to the verge of hell. The experiment failed. Homily and precept," Maso smiled bitterly as he continued, "are but indifferent weapons to fight with against hourly wrongs ; instead of becoming a cardinal and the counsellor of the head of the Church, I am the man ye see. Signor Grimaldi, the monk who gave me his care was Father Girolamo. He told the truth to thy secretary, for I am the son of poor Annunziata Altieri, who was once thought worthy to attract thy passing notice. The deception of calling myself another of thy children was practised for my own security. The means were offered by an accidental confederacy with one of the instruments of thy formidable enemy and cousin, who furnished the papers that had been taken with the little Gaetano. The truth of what I say shali be delivered to you at Genoa. As for the Signor Sigismondo, it is time we ceased to be rivals. We are brothers, with this difference in our fortunes, that he comes of wedlock, and I am of an unexpiated, and almost an unrepented, crime !"

A common cry, in which regret, joy, and surprise were wildly mingled, interrupted the speaker. Adelheid threw herself into her husband's arms, and the pale and conscience-stricken Doge stood with extended arms, an image of contrition, delight, and shame.

"Let me have air !" exclaimed the Prince ; "give me

air or I suffocate ! Where is the child of Annunziata ?—I will at least atone to him for the wrong done his mother !”

It was too late. The victim of another's fault had cast himself over the edge of the precipice with reckless hardihood, and he was already beyond the reach of the voice, in his swift descent, by a shorter but dangerous path, toward Aoste. Nettuno was at his heels. It was evident that he endeavored to outstrip Pippo and Conrad, who were trudging ahead by the more beaten road. In a few minutes he turned the brow of beetling rock, and was lost to view.

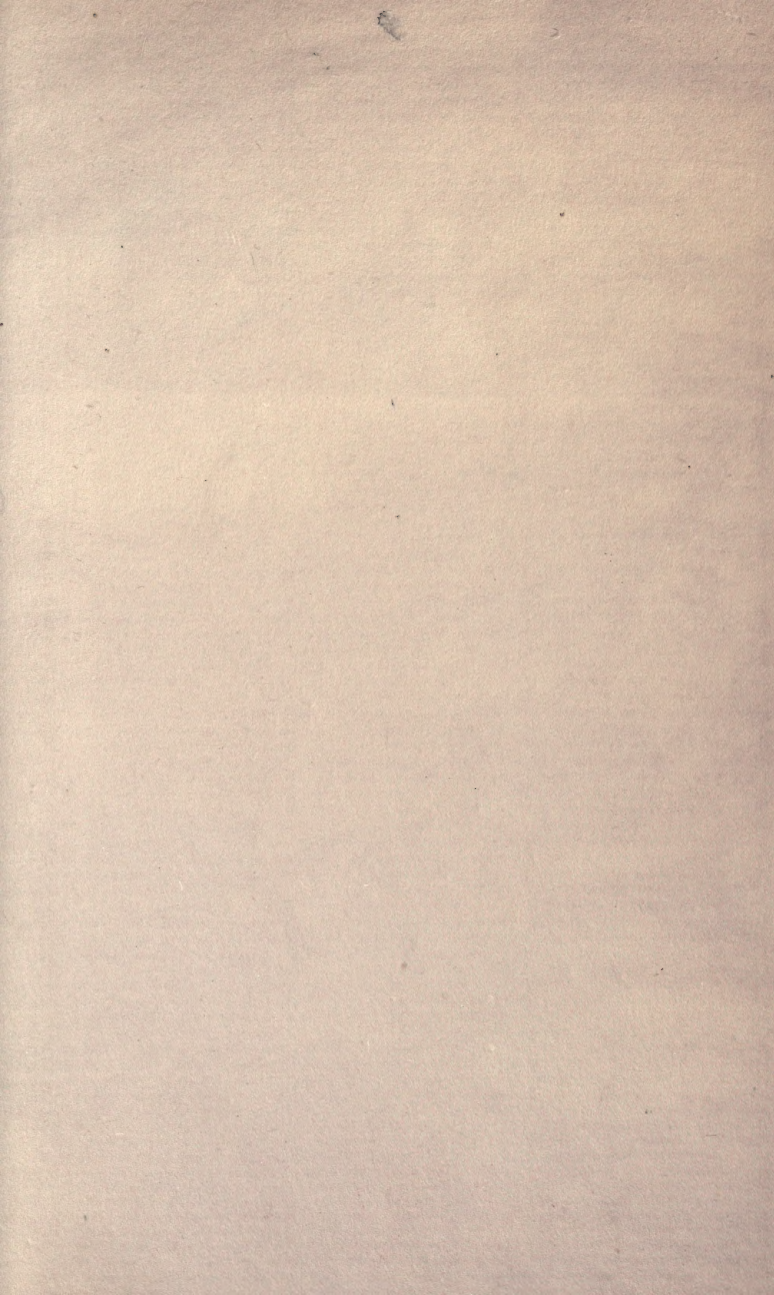
This was the last that was known of *Il Maledetto*. At Genoa, the Doge secretly received the confirmation of all that he had heard, and Sigismund was legally placed in possession of his birthright. The latter made many generous but useless efforts to discover and to reclaim his brother. With a delicacy that could hardly be expected, the outlaw had withdrawn from a scene which he now felt to be unsuited to his habits, and he never permitted the veil to be withdrawn from the place of his retreat.

The only consolation that his relatives ever obtained arose from an event which brought Pippo under the condemnation of the law. Before his execution, the buffoon confessed that Jacques Colis fell by the hands of Conrad and himself, and that, ignorant of Maso's expedient on his own account, they had made use of Nettuno to convey the plundered jewelry undetected across the frontiers of Piedmont.

THE END.



NRLF



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